









Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2015



ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

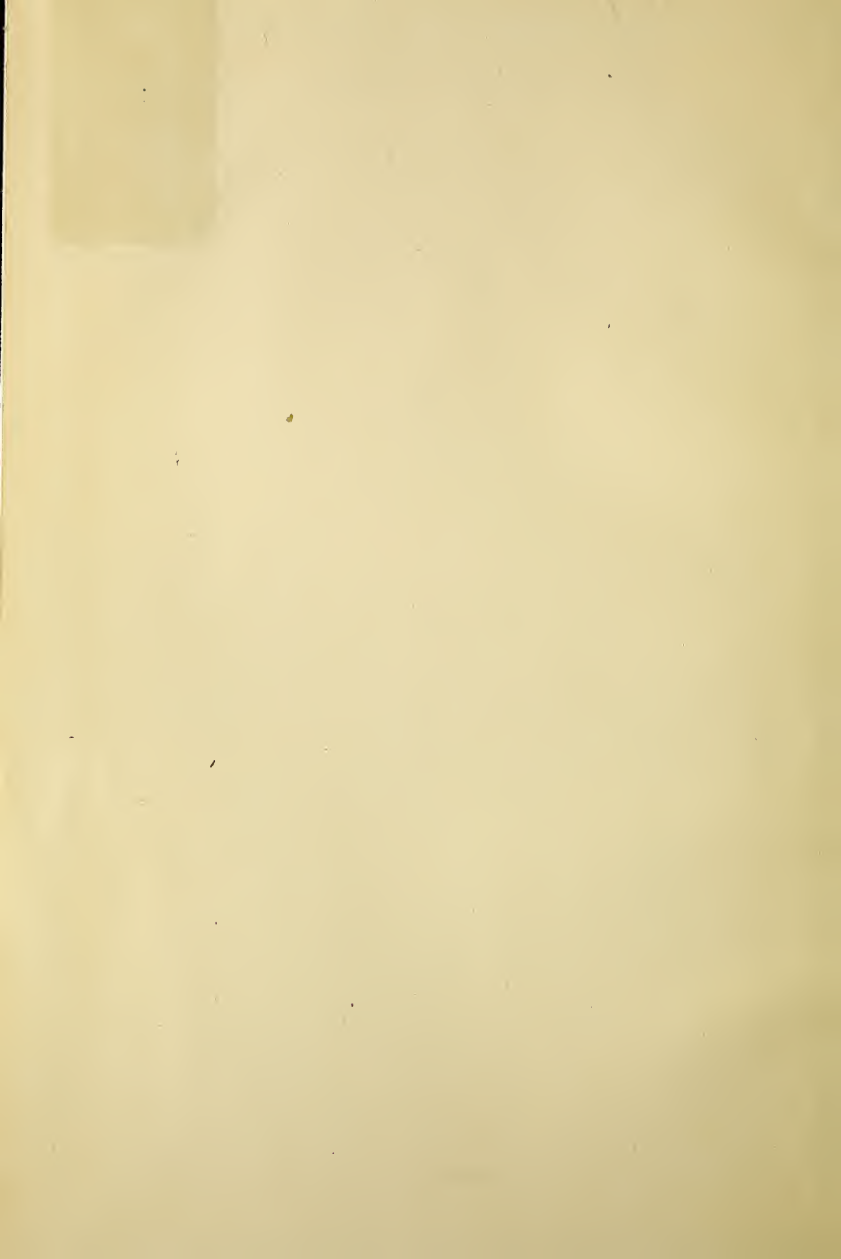


3 1833 01067 4270

GENEALOGY

974.402

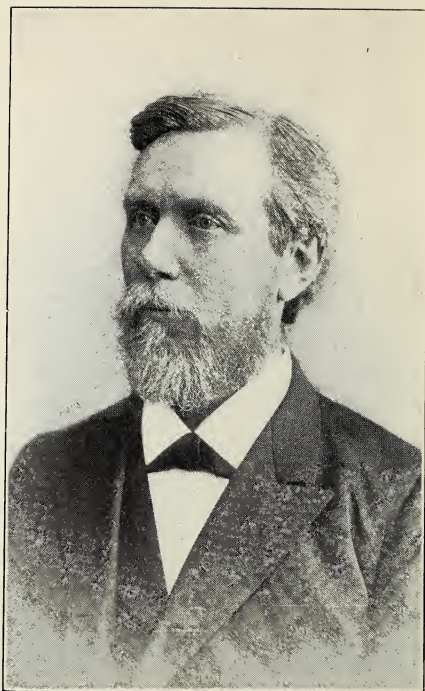
N7720











REV. A. C. OSBORN.

# HISTORY

*of the*

## North Adams Baptist Church

FROM OCTOBER 30, 1808 TO OCTOBER 30, 1878



*By* A. C. OSBORN, D. D., LL. D.

Pastor, 1877-1884

*The R. L. Bryan Company, Printers*

*Columbia, South Carolina*

1908





# CONTENTS

---

	PAGE
Introduction .....	5
Early History.....	7
The First Meeting House.....	8
Baptist Preaching Previous to Organization of the Church.	12
Constitution of the Church.....	14
The Second House of Worship.....	20
The Third House of Worship.....	37
Doctrines of the Church.....	44
Associational Connection .....	62
Discipline .....	64
Revivals .....	75
Pastors .....	88
George Witherell .....	89
Elijah F. Willey.....	92
Hosea Wheeler .....	93
George Robinson .....	94
Samuel Savory .....	96
Charles B. Keyes.....	97
Thomas S. Rogers.....	100
Miles Sanford .....	102
Deacons .....	105
The Sunday School.....	112



## INTRODUCTION

---

This history was written thirty years ago. It was designed to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the church. The facts of history are unchanged by the passing of the years.

The following is the Introduction as written in October, 1878:

The North Adams Baptist Church, on the 30th day of the current month will be 70 years old. As it has reached what, in a human life would be deemed a full ripened maturity, it has been deemed worthy of something more than a hasty array of mere names and dates, or a brief sketch of a page or two. The purpose in the following paper has been to write a real history of the church; giving the facts with sufficient fulness of detail to show not only *what* the fathers did, but *how* they did it; to exhibit the inner life and genius of the body, rather than its external form.

It now sees the light on the

### ONE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY.

When this history as it now appears was written, in 1878, it was found it would not be convenient then to publish it. It was laid aside unfinished. It is published as then written, incomplete and without revision. In the sketches of the pastors none is given for Asa H. Palmer, pastor one year, 1835; for Lemuel Covell, pastor two years, 1836-'37; for John Alden, pastor five years, 1840-'45; for Horace T. Love, pastor six years, 1846-'51; for Miles Sanford, D. D., pastor eighteen years, 1853-'71, except his letter of acceptance; for Courtland W. Anable, D. D., pastor five years, 1872-'77. The official figures for the last two dates are not at hand at this writing and they may not be exact.

There is no treatment here with regard to the devoted line of remarkably gifted and judicious church clerks, as was intended. Neither is there anything here upon the parsonages that the church so liberally provided for its pastors. Nor is there any mention of the six outstations at all of which, for many years the church, by the voluntary service of its members, maintained Sunday schools and more or less stated preaching, namely: Blackinton, the Union, the Beaver, the White School-house on the East Mountain, the Walden School on the East road to Adams, and Houghtonville. From the spirit of self-denying work thus kept alive, and the fields thus faithfully and prayerfully cultivated, very much of the large ingatherings came.

With its omissions and its limitations this bit of church history is sent forth on this centennial anniversary to tell what the fathers did and how they did it, by one who loves the old church and who gave to its service some of the best years of his life.

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

A. C. OSBORN.

Benedict College, Columbia, S. C., October 30, 1908.

# HISTORY OF NORTH ADAMS BAPTIST CHURCH

---

## Early History

---

The first settlers of what is now the town of North Adams, came from Connecticut. The colonists made two settlements: one where North Adams now is, and another where Adams is. Between the two a few families were located. The company to which the lands belonged set apart a tract for the maintenance of worship, of the standing, or Congregational order.

To accommodate both settlements as well as the families intermediate, a log meeting house was built midway between the two, on the cross road which forms the southern side of what is known as the four mile square, near where it intersects with the west road, about where the railroad track now crosses that road. A Congregational church was organized there 1766, with Samuel Todd as pastor. Ten years after, the colonists sold their lands to parties from Rhode Island, who were mostly Quakers. The removals consequent upon this change of proprietors so weakened the Congregational influence that the church ceased to exist; Mr. Todd, however, retained possession of the church lands.

After this there was no religious society or church in what was then the town of Adams, until one was organized by the Quakers in 1781. These Quaker colonists built in that year a frame meeting house near the village of Adams that still stands, well preserved, on the hill above the cemetery.

## The First Meeting House

---

In 1782 the frame of a meeting house was put up in North Adams, on the land of Jeremiah Colgrove, on the east side of what is now Church street, near where the William Blackinton mansion, now the City Library, stands. The frame was covered, but the house stood otherwise unfinished, and but little used for twelve years, until 1794. This house was held by the proprietors for religious meetings without preference to any particular denomination. There was at that time no church of any denomination in North Adams. Of the churches now existing, the Baptist church was constituted October 30, 1808, the first stated Methodist preaching in the village of North Adams was in 1824; but the church organization was not till some years afterward. The Congregational church was constituted April 19, 1827, the Universalist, the Episcopal and the Catholic churches not until still later.

The oldest official records bearing upon religious work in North Adams,\* are a volume of the records of the "North Society of Adams," which includes the transactions of the Society from July 14, 1794, to May 15, 1848. In this book, however, there are no entries from March 22, 1800, to April 13, 1827. The first entry in this volume is with reference to removing and repairing the meeting house, and is as follows:

"At a meeting of a number of the inhabitants of the North Society of Adams held at the Meeting House on the 14th of July, 1794, Voted; Mr. John Veazie, Moderator.

"Voted; Charles Parsons, Clerk of said Society.

"After conversing with the old Proprietors of the Meeting House, viz: Israel Jones, Esqr., Mr. John Kilburn, Jeremiah Colgrove, Stephen Ives, Oliver Parker, Elias Jones, Amasa

---

\*The town of Adams at this time included North Adams. The word *Adams*, used in the early papers cited, refers always to what is now North Adams.



"Ives, and Reuben Hinman, who all agree to give up their claim "as holding any prior right, and to become proprietors in common with those who shall assist in removing and repairing it "so as to make it comfortable and convenient to meet in for "public worship;

"Voted; That a Committee of three be chosen for the purpose of getting a subscription filled up for raising a sum of "money, or its value, for the purpose of removing and repairing "said house, and to consist of the following persons, viz., "Benajah Tubbs, Samuel Kimball, and David Darling, Jr."

The records do not show how the parties named as proprietors of the first meeting house became such; probably, however, as in the case of subsequent proprietors, from the fact that they owned the pews. After the old proprietors had relinquished their claims, the house was removed to the site on which the Baptist Church now stands, repaired, and the pews sold at auction to the highest bidder. At the first sale twenty-two pews were sold. This sale was on November 8, 1795. The price for which the pews sold is entered in the records in pounds and shillings. The highest price paid was £10.3 and the lowest £2.8. The entire sum realized for the twenty-two pews was £108.3. Within the next two years thirty-six additional pews were sold. These subsequent sales are entered in the record in dollars and cents, indicating the change in currency then in progress. These sales amounted to \$670. The total sum received from the sale of pews, was, therefore, about \$1,210. The intention evidently was to make the sale of pews pay the charges for removal and repairs. This intention was not realized. On June 25, 1796, it was by the proprietors,

"Voted; That if the money raised by the sale of the "pews is not sufficient to finish the lower part of the Meeting "House, lay the gallery floor, &c., the wantage shall be assessed "on the pews at the discretion of a committee to be chosen for that purpose."

Subsequently the assessment made by this committee was laid before the proprietors and approved. The amount assessed is not given. But more money still was needed, and as there was a demand for pews more pews were added and sold; all available space, both on the main floor and in the galleries, being used for this purpose. At first it was the intention to reserve certain space in the front and rear of the body of the house for *seats*; a distinction being made between *pews* and *seats*. The *pews* in the old house were square in form, closed by a door, with sittings on three sides. These were private property. The *seats* were open benches, and were for the use of the public. August 26, 1796, the proprietors passed the following resolutions:

“Voted; To reconsider the vote for having *seats* before and “behind the *pews* in the square of the house, and make pews in “their room and sell them towards defraying the expense of “finishing the Meeting House.

“Voted; To build two corner pews in the house on the ground “allotted for stairs, and sell them, the money to help defray the “expenses of finishing the Meeting House.”

The only sittings finally reserved “for the public use” were in the gallery, and the “three pews joining the singers’ seats in front, south side of the house.”

Several purchasers of pews bought more than one. Jeremiah Colgrove bought seven. The total number of those who bid off pews was 39. These purchasers and their successors were henceforth designated the proprietors. The pews were bought and sold, and transferred by deed, or devised by will, precisely as real estate. The property was deemed to be vested exclusively in the owners of the pews. They controlled it absolutely. Even the Baptist *church*, after it was organized, and until 1830, occupied the house by sufferance only.

These proprietors, however, appear to have had no legal title to the land on which the house on Church street originally stood. After the house was moved, on September 15, 1794, it was

“Voted; By the old proprietors present that they quit and “relinquish their title to the land where the Meeting House “formerly stood unto Jeremiah Colgrove for him to occupy and “improve the same, until such time as it shall appear to be some “individual’s property.”

## Baptist Preaching Previous to Organization of the Church

---

The first mention in the records of preaching in this house is under date of April 28, 1797.

“Voted; That the society agree to provide preaching through “the summer at the Meeting House.

“Voted; That a committee of three be appointed to treat with “Elder Thompson, of Swanzy, to see if they can procure him “to preach in this house; if not, to provide some other person to “preach through the summer season.”

The committee appointed, provided preaching; but by whom, the records do not show. They appear, however, not to have done their work satisfactorily. For at a meeting held the next year, May 12, 1798, the following votes were passed:

“Voted; That it is the minds of those present to have preach- “ing in the Meeting House the ensuing season.

“Voted; To discharge the committee appointed the last season “to supply the Meeting House with preaching.

“Voted; To choose a committee of three to provide preaching “in the Meeting House the ensuing season, and to settle for the “last season’s preaching upon the former subscription.”

The next entry with reference to preaching is on January 18, 1800:

“Voted; To hire Elder Dyer Stark three-quarters of the “time, or Sabbaths, in our Meeting House, and the other quar- “ter in Stamford, by their paying their proportion.”

The proposed arrangement was not effected. For on the 17th of March, 1801, this notice was given:

“These are to notify the people of the North Society in “Adams and Clarksburg to meet at Roger Wings, Innholder, in “Adams on Saturday, 22d day of this month at 2 o’clock in the

“afternoon, to see if they can agree with Elder Dyer Stark to “preach another year. Also the people are requested to bring “an accmpt of what they have paid toward what they subscribed last year.”

On the day named it was,

“Voted; That Elder Dyer Stark preach here half of the time “and dock one-third of the subscription which is subscribed.”

These are all the *official records* now extant, with reference to preaching in North Adams, previous to the organization of the Baptist church.

Elder Dyer Stark was a Baptist minister. The next year, 1802, and for two years following, he was pastor of the Baptist church in South Williamstown, which church had been organized in 1794. Subsequently he was pastor several years at Pownal. While preaching at Stamford, where a Baptist church had been organized in 1798, he spent part of his time as indicated by the votes given, in North Adams, where a large proportion of the members of the Stamford church were residing. Upon becoming pastor at Williamstown he continued to preach more or less in North Adams. After this Elder Calvin Keyes, a highly esteemed Baptist minister of Vermont, and others, maintained preaching the greater part of the time, until the organization of the church in 1808.

## Constitution of the Church

---

The Church records of the First Baptist *Church* of North Adams, as distinguished from the *Society* records, extend back to October 30, 1808. The following is the first entry in the first volume of the records of the church:

### "CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH IN ADAMS.

"At a council held at the village school house in Adams by request of a number of brethren, to establish a church, met on the 30th of October, 1808, members from the following churches, viz.:

"From Pownal.	{	John Williams
		Ephraim Bushnell
		Isaac Clark
		Abiathar Buck.
"From Stamford.	{	Jacob Sampson
		George Sampson
		Mathew Baker.
"From Berlin.	{	Elder Baker
		Jonathan Hakes
		Paul Himes.
"From Cheshire.	{	Aaron Bowen
		Daniel Bowen
		Allen Brown.
"From Conway.	{	Elder Keyes
		Amaziah Toby
		Simeon Porter
		Ebenezer Redfield.

"Elder Hanes and Bennett, with other brethren present, were invited to take a seat with us. Chose Paul Himes, Clerk, and Elder Keyes, Moderator. The Moderator read a hymn and sung, and prayed to Almighty God for wisdom to direct. Called upon the brethren to know the number that wished to be constituted into a church and found them to be about thirty, viz.:



"David Darling,  
 "Samuel Stafford,  
 "David Darling, Jr.,  
 "Caleb Whitman,  
 "Dudley Loveland,  
 "Joseph Dennis,  
 "Samuel Veazie,  
 "Reuben Amedon,  
 "Mary Salisbury,  
 "Oliver Whitman,  
 "Abigail Darling,  
 "Elizabeth Wells,

"with a number of other brethren from other churches, which  
 "will be inserted as they receive their letters.

"The Moderator called upon the brethren to know their doctrinal points of faith and practice in the religion of Jesus Christ; and after consulting the brethren and asking a number of questions, we think that we found them sound in the faith. And after the council retired alone, and took up the matter, and after deliberating in the sight of God conversing upon the subject, we do give it as our opinion that God has erected a Candlestick in this place, and therefore we do fellowship them as a church.

"CALVIN KEYES, Moderator,  
 "PAUL HIMES, Clerk.

"P. S.—After reading the above result to the brethren, the Moderator gave them the Right-hand of Fellowship as a Gospel Baptist Church of Christ."

The next entry in the records is as follows:

"ADAMS, Saturday, January 7, 1809.

"Under the fellowship of the afore-mentioned council the brethren met and brought forward their letters, viz.:

"From Stamford Church—Otis Blackinton,  
                                   Gideon Mixer,  
                                   George Whitman,  
                                   Jonathan Hunt,†



"N. B.—This mark, †, were those that were fellowshiped by this church and had no letter.

John Willey,†  
 Amasa Sheldon,†  
 Milley Darling,  
 Rebecca Veazie,  
 Susannah Willey,†  
 Ruth Blackinton,  
 Susannah Whitman,  
 Amy Mixer,  
 Hannah Hunt,†  
 Abigail Sheldon, by letter.  
 Williby Smith,  
 Abigail Waterman,  
 Huldah Thomas,  
 Huldah S. Thomas,  
 Duty S. Carpenter,†  
 Thankful Wilbur,  
 Candace Harrington,†  
 Lois Head,†  
 Elizabeth Horton,

"From Cheshire—

"and entered into Covenant to maintain the visibility of a "Church of Christ.

"1st. Chose Otis Blackinton, Moderator.

"2d. Gideon Mixer, Church Clerk.

"3d. Otis Blackinton and Caleb Whitman, Deacons."

From this record it will be seen that the number actually named by the Council and fellowshiped as a church, was twelve—eight brethren and four sisters. These were really the constituent members. This was the church as "constituted" by the council.

At the same time the council expressly recognized the fact that there were others who would have been associated with the twelve, had they at that time had their Letters from the churches of which they were members. When, therefore, these obtained their Letters, they were not received as members in the ordinary manner by vote of the church, but simply "brought forward their Letters" and were considered and counted as

constituent members. Thus fifteen were added to the original twelve, making the assumed number of the constituent members twenty-seven.

There were also eight others, who had evidently been members of Baptist Churches, but who were unable to present Letters. It appears that "this church" expressed towards them its fellowship. "This Church," then, expressing thus its fellowship, did not primarily include them. They cannot, therefore, with any propriety be deemed a part of the constituent membership, although their names occur in the list with the other names.

Under date of January 10, 1829, there is in the records an historical memorandum in which it is said "This church was organized October 30, 1809, of *twenty-three* members." Again, under date of May 8, 1831, is an Annual Letter to the Association in which it is said, "The Church was constituted October 30 (1808), of *twenty-three* members." It is impossible to reconcile these statements with the records. The list of names given under date of January 7, 1809, those who brought in their letters two months after the organization of the church, numbers just twenty-three. It is evident that the writers took this list as representing the constituent members. But this list does not contain the names of the *twelve* actually recognized as the church by the Council, and it does contain the names of *eight* who were *fellowshipped* by the church, and who, therefore, could not have been considered members of the church when that act of fellowship was expressed. It appears that of the fifteen who presented Letters, on January 7, 1809, fourteen brought Letters from the church at Stamford, Vt., and one a Letter from the church at Cheshire. The records do not show whence came the Letters of the twelve recognized by the Council. But it is known that a part, if not all of them, were from the church at Stamford. The early records of the Stamford

church are lost. The records given above are sufficient, however, to show that the North Adams church was so largely constituted of members from the Stamford church as to make it really a daughter of that church.

June 7, 1809, the church was admitted to the Shaftsbury Association, which met that year with the church at Schodac, N. Y. At that date, seven months after its organization, the church reported to the Association forty-one members, with Elder George Witherell as pastor.

Much confusion has arisen in regard to the early history of the churches in Western Massachusetts, from the changes which from time to time have been made in the geographical divisions of the county. Several of the churches have changed their names to correspond with the changes in the towns. As, for example, the Shaftsbury Association, in 1794, received into its fellowship the Great Barrington Baptist Church, and gave the statistics of that church regularly until 1811, while in fact there never was a Baptist church in Great Barrington. In 1811 the Great Barrington Church disappears from the minutes and the Egremont church appears. The explanation is that the town of Great Barrington originally included what is now Egremont. The church was located in that part subsequently included in Egremont, and the name of the church was changed to correspond.

The same is true of the "Adams Church." The earliest copy extant of the minutes of the Shaftsbury Association has the following title page: "Minutes of the Shaftsbury Association, at their Annual Convention held at Elder Warden's Meeting House in Adams, 1786."

The statistical table for that year reports the Adams church as having 117 members, with Peter Warden as pastor. We have already seen that the first Baptist Church organized in the town of Adams was constituted in 1808, twenty-two years after

the Association, according to its minutes, held its annual session with the Adams church.

Also, in the history of the Cheshire Church, printed in the minutes of the Berkshire Association for the year 1856, in relating the circumstances of the constitution of the Lanesboro church in 1789, subsequently known as the Second Church of Cheshire, among the delegates present at the council, Peter Warden and others are named "from the church in Adams." Backus, in his history, enumerates the Baptist Churches in Berkshire Co., in 1784, and heads the list with the Adams church. It would appear impossible to reconcile these statements with the statement that there was no Baptist church in Adams until 1808.

The explanation is found in the fact that what was known as Adams originally included, or was supposed to include, a part of what is now Cheshire. Cheshire was incorporated as a town in 1793. Elder Warden's church on Stafford Hill which dated back to 1769, and which had been known, as the Adams church, was within the limits of the new town, and was thereafter known as the First Church of Cheshire. When the Association met with that church in 1786 the *town* of Cheshire was not yet incorporated. But the settlement was already known as Cheshire. Hence, while the title page of the minutes says the meeting was "at Elder Warden's Meeting House in Adams," the statistical table names the church "Adams or First Cheshire."

## The Second House of Worship

---

After the organization of the Baptist church in North Adams, that church appears to have occupied the Meeting House the greater part of the time, though services were held in the house more or less by other denominations.

There was no change in the house or in its management until 1827. In that year a question arose, as was inevitable, in regard to rights of the different denominations in the house. There had been no official meeting of the proprietors since 1800. A meeting was held under the following call. The original of this paper, with the return on the back, and the report of the committee, are on file among the church papers; as also the originals of most of the papers here cited:

"Berkshire. S. S.

"[L. s.] To Edward Richmond, one of the Proprietors of  
"the North meeting house in the town of Adams.

"You are required to notify and warn the proprietors  
"of said meeting house according to law to meet at said Meet-  
"ing House on Saturday, the 28th inst., at 4 o'clock, p. m., to  
"act on the following articles, viz.:

"1st. To choose a Moderator,

"2d. To choose a Clerk,

"3d. To see what measures said proprietors will take with  
"regard to the Meeting House.

"Given under my hand and seal, this 13th day of April, 1827.

"NATHAN PUTNAM, Justice of the Peace.

"Return.

"April 14, 1827. I have notified the proprietors of the  
"within specified Meeting House, by posting up a notification  
"on the door of said house.

"EDWARD RICHMOND."

The proprietors met agreeably to this call, and,



"Voted; To choose a committee of three to ascertain and "report as to the right of each religious society to occupy said "house."

James Cumming, Giles Tinker and Artemas Crittenden were the committee.

At a meeting held May 10, 1827, the committee made the following report:

"We the subscribers, a committee chosen to report to the "owners of the Meeting House in North Adams, called the "Baptist Meeting House,

"Do report as follows: That when the Baptists have no minister of their own denomination to preach to them, and the "Presbyterians have a minister of their denomination to preach "to them, the Baptists consent that the Presbyterians occupy "said house. On examination we have ascertained that the "Baptists and those that are most interested in the prosperity of "the Baptist people, own the greater share of said house.

"We further report that in our opinion, for the prosperity "of religion, the union and good feeling of Christians, and the "benefit of Society, the Baptists and others consent to a neighborly accommodation of said house to the Presbyterians and "Methodists; said report if accepted to remain in force for one year.

"J. CUMMING,  
"G. TINKER.

"N. Adams, May 10, 1827."

The legal steps taken in calling the above meeting,—the procuring of an order from a Justice of the Peace and the formal return to the Justice, show that an important question was pending, and that it was then to be determined in legal form. The report of the committee was accepted. By accepting it, the proprietors practically declared that the house was for the use of the Baptists; that they should have exclusive use of it when they had a pastor; the Presbyterians to use it only when they had a pastor, and the Baptists had none. It appears to

have been already known as the Baptist Meeting House. By this action of the proprietors it was formally declared to be for the use and benefit of the Baptist church, although still owned by the pew holders.

About two years after this it was found necessary to take steps toward the building of a larger house of worship. The proprietors were called together by the following notice:

"The proprietors of the Baptist Meeting House in the North Village of Adams are hereby notified to meet at Alpheus Smith's on Saturday, the 7th day of February next, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, to take into consideration the disposing of the old Meeting House.

"And also others who are subscribers or interested in building the new Meeting House are requested to meet at the same time and place to take measures for locating and building said house.

"N. PUTNAM, Proprietor's Chr.

"North Adams, January 29, 1829."

The proprietors met agreeably to the above notice, and,

"Voted: To appoint a committee of three to ascertain the proprietor's right in the old Meeting House, and what portion each one owns.

"Voted: That the same committee ascertain what can be done with the old Meeting House; and what it can be sold for, either where it stands or taken off, and where a place can be procured to set the new one to the best advantage."

Subsequently Edward Richmond, Wm. E. Brayton and David Darling were appointed a committee "To dispose of the old Meeting House, and superintend the building of the new." It was also "Voted: That said committee be authorized to prize the pews in the old house and sell said old house to the highest bidder."

In accordance with this authorization there was posted the following



## "NOTICE.

"Agreeable to a vote of the proprietors of the Baptist Meeting House in this village, the subscribers will sell said house to the highest bidder on Saturday, the 23d inst., at 4 p. m., at said house. Terms made known at the time of sale.

"EDWARD RICHMOND,

"W. E. BRAYTON,

"DAVID DARLING,

"Committee.

"N. Adams, May 20, 1829."

The sale was postponed to the 8th of June, when the house was sold at auction to Jeremiah Colgrove for \$185. The pews had been appraised by the committee, so as to determine their relative values, and this sum, \$185, was to be paid over to the proprietors in liquidation of their respective claims, in proportion to the appraised value of each pew, except so far as the owners would voluntarily surrender their claims. Thirty-four years had passed since the first sale of the pews. The entire number of ascertained proprietors now was but nineteen. Some of these relinquished to the building committee for the benefit of the new house their proportion of the amount for which the house sold.

At a meeting of the proprietors held March 11, 1829,

"Jeremiah Colegrove made a proposition as follows: That he would give a deed of the land where the old house stands, also relinquish all his right in the old house, in consideration of his having too slips in the new house, which he has designated "on the plan."

The proprietors,

"Voted, To accept the above proposition."

Mr. Colgrove had originally, more than thirty years before, bought seven pews in the old house, for which he had paid \$109; and he still held three pews on the main floor and all the

pews in the gallery that then had a proprietary ownership. These pews covered, according to the appraisal, nearly one-half of the entire value of the pews, then held by the ascertained proprietors. He now proposed to relinquish all right in that house, and take in lieu thereof two slips in the new house, and give, in addition, a deed to the land on which the house stood.

The following is a copy of the deed of this land, as now of record:

“A.”

“Jeremiah Colgrove	}	To all people to whom these presents shall come.
to		
“Otis Blackinton.	}	

“Greeting:

“Know ye, That I, Jeremiah Colgrove, Esq., of Adams, in  
 “the County of Berkshine, and Commonwealth of Massachu-  
 “setts, in consideration of the sum of ninety-six dollars to me  
 “in hand paid by Otis Blackinton—Trustee of the First Baptist  
 “Church and Society of Adams, the receipt whereof I do  
 “hereby acknowledge, do hereby give, grant, sell and convey  
 “unto the said Otis Blackinton, and his successors in said office  
 “as Trustees of the said Church and Society of Adams forever,  
 “for the purpose of erecting thereon a Meeting House for Reli-  
 “gious services; said religious services to be exclusively regu-  
 “lated by the Baptist Church, the following described piece of  
 “land, situate in said Adams, (North Village), beginning at a  
 “stake and stones eight feet from the southeast corner of Ste-  
 “phen Damon’s dwelling house, bearing south forty-eight de-  
 “grees west; thence south forty-eight degrees west four rods  
 “and twelve links; thence south fifty-seven degrees east seven-  
 “teen links; thence south twenty-five and a half degrees west,  
 “three and a half rods to the Turnpike Road; thence south  
 “sixty-nine degrees east six rods and twenty-two links on the  
 “north side of said Turnpike to the County road; thence north  
 “nine and a half degrees east seven rod and ten links on the  
 “west side of said County road; thence north sixty-one degrees  
 “west four rods to the place of beginning, being the site of the

"old Baptist Meeting House, and by estimation containing forty square rods of land, be it the same more or less.

"To have and to hold the aforegranted Premises to the said Otis and his successors in office to their use and behoof forever, for the above mentioned purpose. And I do covenant with the said Otis and his successors in office, that I am lawfully seized in fee of the aforegranted premises—that they are free of all incumbrances—that I have good right to sell and convey the same to the said Otis and his successors in office, and that I will warrant and defend the same Premises to the said Otis and his successors in office forever, against the lawful claims and demands of all persons.

"In witness whereof I, the said Jeremiah Colgrove, Esq., hereunto set my hand and seal, this tenth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty-nine.

"JEREMIAH COLGROVE & Seal.

*her*

"LYDIA X COLGROVE & Seal.

*mark*

"Signed, sealed and delivered in presence of us

"CHAS. B. KEYES,

"JOHN WHIPPLE.

"Berkshire, ss. April 14, 1829. Then the above named Jeremiah Colgrove acknowledged the above instrument to be his free act and deed. Before me,

"WM. E. BRAYTON, J. Peace.

"18 August, 1830. Rec'd and recorded from the original, by  
"G. N. BRIGGS."

This relinquishment of his pews by Mr. Colgrove and the relinquishment to the building committee of the claims of seven others, left but \$62 to be paid to the remaining proprietors, out of the \$185, for which the house sold.

The old frame house was removed by Mr. Colgrove, who had purchased it, to the lot on which it now stands, directly in the rear of present church edifice. It is now used as a dwelling house and carpenter shop. It is 96 years (116 now) since it was built, but it appears to be as sound as when erected.

The work of building the new house was now vigorously prosecuted. On December 20, 1828, Elisha Kingsley, Edward Richmond, W. E. Brayton and Nathan Putnan had been appointed a committee "To draft a plan of building, and ascertain whether sufficient money can be raised to build the house." The plan adopted was for a brick house, forty by sixty feet, with a spire. The square pews of the old house were to be superceded by "slips" in the new; but as before, the ownership was to be absolutely in the holders of the sittings. The needed funds were, therefore, obtained as far as possible by the sale of the slips as they were shown upon the plan. As many slips as possible were sold, and then a subscription paper was circulated to secure help from those who might not desire to purchase slips. The original subscription paper, yellow from age, soiled and worn by much handling, and bearing the autograph signatures of many of the old citizens, is still preserved in the archives of the church. As this was the first house of worship built by any one denomination in the village of North Adams, this subscription paper is well worthy of preservation. The heading is as follows:

"Whereas, the Baptist Church and Society propose building a "Meeting House to be located in the North Village of Adams, "we the subscribers promise to pay the several sums set against "our names for the purpose aforesaid—provided there is "twenty-five hundred dollars raised for that purpose—the same "to be paid to the building committee that shall be appointed. "Said sum of \$2,500 to be subscribed by the first of April "next.

"Adams, December 29, 1828."

On this paper \$128 was subscribed, and a portion of that was payable in work. The balance of the money was raised by the sale of slips. Edward Richmond, Wm. E. Brayton and David Darling were the building committee. The work was pushed rapidly forward. After the exterior was completed it was

found there would not be funds enough in hand to finish the building. The following paper was, therefore, circulated and signed by the holders of fifty pews:

"We the subscribers agree to pay two dollars on each slip "which we have subscribed for in the new Baptist Meeting "House for the purpose of painting the inside of said house, "and also for procuring stove and pipe."

This paper with the autograph signatures is preserved among the papers of the church, as are also specifications, contracts, bills, accounts, receipts, memoranda, etc. These were all carefully placed on file by the committee, and almost every part of their work and the exact cost can be traced from the original papers. One of the most interesting of these papers is an account of "Work turned in on Meeting House," much of the labor having been rendered without pay.

The following is what was paid for the building of the house:

For Lumber .. .. .	\$629 89
Nails.. .. .	55 44
Boarding Carpenters .. .. .	137 81
Lime.. .. .	127 17
Sand .. .. .	55 72
Underpinning, and cut stone.....	209 00
Brick .. .. .	355 15
Glass .. .. .	46 88
Spire.. .. .	40 00
Painting outside .. .. .	126 00
Mason work, besides underpinning.....	268 00
Carpenter's work .. .. .	615 00
Blacksmithing .. .. .	49 88
Damage to Magoon on act., of waiting for brick.	6 00
Miscellaneous.. .. .	32 00
Trimnings.. .. .	34 95
Painting inside, and stove and pipe.....	98 33

---

\$2,867 22



The final report of the committee is as follows :

The Society in account with the Committee.

*Dr.*

Paid J. Colgrove for land and right in old house .....	\$96 00	
Slips set off to proprietors in old house..	91 00	
Cost of new house.....	\$2,872 00	\$3,059 00

*Cr.*

By amt. of slips sold.....	\$2,248 00	
Sale of old Meeting House.....	185 00	
Amt. of subscription supposed col- lectable ..	50 00	
Tax on 50 slips.....	100 00	
Pews in old house relinquished.....	33 00	
Pews unsold .....	421 00	\$3,037 00

There is a difference of \$4.78 in the cost of the house as given in the official report, and as given in the detailed memoranda above, occasioned probably by including in the report some small item omitted in the memorandum. The \$96 paid to J. Colgrove, and named in the deed as price paid him for the land was paid by deeding to him the two slips previously agreed upon, that being the price of the slips. The slips in this house were to be deeded to the purchasers, as the pews had been in the old. As the slips had had no previous owners there was a puzzling question as to the source whence the purchasers were to derive their deeds. It was finally settled by the proprietors that were to be, thus :

“At a meeting legally notified, held at the house of Alpheus Smith, Innkeeper, the 22d day of May, 1830 :

“Voted; That said Building Committee be and they are hereby authorized to deed said slips to the several individuals who have or may subscribe toward building the same.”

The pews were accordingly deeded to the purchasers by the Building Committee. The following is a copy of the first deed put on record :

“Know all men by these presents :

“That we, Edward Richmond, David Darling and William E. Brayton, a committee appointed by the Baptist Church and Society in Adams, North Village and vicinity, for building a Meeting House in said village and for disposing of the slips in said house, in consideration of the sum of two hundred and thirty-eight dollars paid by Otis Blackinton, of said Adams, do hereby sell and convey unto said Otis slips No. 6, No. 9, No. 11, No. 16 west in said house, to have and to hold the same to him the said Otis his heirs and assigns forever.

“In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and seals this 10th day of July, 1830.

“EDWARD RICHMOND, [L. S.]

“WM. E. BRAYTON, [L. S.]

“DAVID DARLING, [L. S.]

“Witness :

“ANSON L. BRAYTON,

“Berkshire, s. s.”

“Then the above-named Edward Richmond, David Darling and Wm. E. Brayton personally appeared and acknowledged the above instrument as their free act and deed. Before me, Jeremiah Colgrove, Justice of the Peace, North Adams, 13th July, 1830.”

This deed recites that the committees were appointed by the *Church* and *Society*. The meeting at which they were at first appointed as a Building Committee, and also the meeting at which they were empowered to sell the pews, were meetings of the proprietors. Up to this time all transactions were by the proprietors, not by the church, as such. The church records not only contain no mention of such a committee, but no reference or allusion whatever to either this house, or the old one, no more than if either had never been in existence, until the dedication of this new house. That entry is as follows :

"Voted; That the following account of the dedication of the  
"new meeting house be recorded in the church book.

"The religious exercises for the first time were on Thursday,  
"the 20th of January, 1830, at 11 o'clock a. m.

"Reading of the Scriptures by Bro. Keyes.

"Prayer by Elder C. W. Hodges, of the 3d Church in Shaftsbury, Vt.

"Singing.

"Dedicatory prayer by Elder W. G. Johnson, of Stamford, Vt.

"Singing.

"Sermon by Elder J. Matteson, of the First Church in Shaftsbury, Vt.

"Singing.

"Prayer by Elder H. T. Baldwin, of Bennington, Vt.

"Singing.

"Benediction by Bro. Keyes.

"Singing.

"The house was commenced (in building), the last of June, 1829. It cost 2,872 dollars."

In the final report of the committee as given above, slips valued at \$421 were reported as unsold. This was virtually a debt upon the house. This was soon paid by the sale of slips, except so much as was represented by the value of four of the lowest priced slips for which no sale could be found. These remained unsold until 1837, when the following entry appears upon the church record:

"The subject of the four side slips which are on the Building Committee was brought up by Bro. D. Darling for the purpose of making them free.

"Voted; Bros. Kingsley, Browning and E. Ingraham be a committee to assess an equal tax (in their judgment) on each male member of the church to make the said slips free."

Practically this was simply the Baptist Church paying the debt on the Baptist Meeting House. But the idea of a separate, outside proprietorship was so fundamental that they con-



ceived of it only as buying the pews; so the church bought four slips in its own house, and as the church would not want to occupy its four slips, albeit they were the only ones it owned, it could set them apart for the public. Thus the church, as such, for the first time became part owner of its own property. But even now although it had paid for four slips the church was not considered as having a voice in the meetings of the proprietors. These slips were simply considered to have been paid for by the membership of the church, but really to belong to nobody, and therefore free.

Under this system of outside proprietorship it will be readily seen that the church could not control its own property. The deeds to the slips and pews were given without reservation or condition to the purchasers, their heirs and assigns, to have and to hold forever. The church was liable to be dispossessed at any time by a vote of the majority of the proprietors.

The church saw and felt the danger. In the old house a majority in interest of the proprietors were not even professors of religion. It was held in law, in such cases that the property was for religious uses. Beyond that there was no limitations. If by inheritance or purchase or change of convictions, a majority of the proprietors had become Presbyterians or even Universalists, the Baptists by a mere vote might have been dispossessed from the house they had built, and have seen it occupied by others. Indeed it was merely by a vote of a majority of the proprietors, as we have already seen, that the Baptists came into the exclusive use and occupancy of the old house. Under this system, which still prevails to a considerable extent in this Commonwealth, it has been no very rare thing for a society to ignore, or come into open conflict with the church. About the time of which we write in different parts of New England, the orthodox Congregational churches stood by in utter helplessness and saw their houses of worship passed over

to the Unitarians. This system, so far as our people were concerned, was in part the result of the oppressive laws of that period.

The laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts at the time of the organization of the church, in 1808, laid upon the Baptists most burdensome exactions. The law with reference to the maintenance of public worship, passed in 1786, empowered,

“The qualified voters of any parish or precinct, at every annual meeting, to grant such sum or sums of money as they shall judge necessary, for ministers, meeting houses, or other parish charges, to be assessed on the poles and property, within the same, as by law provided.”

This gave the majority of the lawful voters in every parish the power to lay any amount of tax they pleased for the purpose of building meeting houses, supporting the ministry or for any parish charges, to be appropriated as the majority might order. At this time, throughout the State, with but very few exceptions, the Congregationalists were in the majority. They were thus placed in possession of a religious establishment, and were enabled to impose and expend taxes for the support of religion as they pleased. All minorities were compelled to submit to their exactions.

The Bill of Rights declared that “all monies paid by the subject to the support of public worship, &c., shall, if the require it, be uniformly applied to the support of a public teacher or teachers of his own religious sect or denomination, provided there be any on whose instruction he attends.”

The construction put upon this by the courts was, that the taxes imposed *must* be paid into the treasury, then, if there were in the parish those who dissented from the majority, they could, by course of law, have the money they had paid in, drawn out and applied to the support of their own denomination; provided there were a minister of their denomination

upon whose instruction they were actually attending. Inasmuch as assessors, collectors, treasurers, judges and jurors were generally on the side of the majority it will be readily seen that the road traveled by our fathers was anything but a smooth one. They were conscientiously opposed to the support of worship by taxation. As they would bring no one into the church by compulsory baptism when in helpless infancy, so they would not compel the adult under the pains and penalties of civil law to the support of the church. Neither were they easily compelled, contrary to their consciences. The older members of the church in North Adams remember well the stories oft told to them by their fathers and mothers, of collectors in the neighboring towns levying upon, and selling for parish taxes, their cattle, or farming implements or even household utensils.

. In 1811 the Chief Justice of the State decided that no society except those incorporated by law could be entitled to the privileges in regard to draw back money. The Baptist churches were not incorporated. This left them no redress. They must pay taxes to support what was called "the standing order" and support their own churches besides. Intense feeling was aroused throughout the State. Petitions signed by many thousands of citizens were sent to the General Court praying for a modification of the laws. Elder John Leland, of Cheshire, accepted a seat in the Legislature for the furtherance of religious liberty, and rendered most efficient service. A law was passed in June, 1811, of the following import:

"That whenever any person shall become a member of any "religious society, corporate or unincorporate, and shall produce a certificate of such membership to the clerk of the town "where he dwells, signed by a committee of the society chosen "for the purpose, such person shall ever afterwards, so long as

"he continues such membership, be exempted from taxation for "the support of public worship and public teachers of religion, "in every other religious corporation whatsoever."

From this it will be seen that even by this law, religious equality was far from being secured. As the Baptists were almost every where in the minority they must either pay the parish taxes, or submit to the humiliating condition of obtaining from a committee a certificate by which they might be exempted.

As the Baptist church in North Adams was for nineteen years the only church in the place, it might at the time of its organization have been incorporated under the law of 1786 and have imposed taxes upon the whole community for its benefit by simply a majority vote. It might subsequently have done the same under the law of 1811. Absolute religious freedom has, however, ever been a fundamental article in the Baptist faith. They would neither pay taxes willingly for the support of other churches, nor tax others for the support of their own churches.

Neither would they as the law then stood become incorporated. Every incorporated society was required by law to be constantly provided with a preacher. In case it was without three months in any six it was liable to a fine of not more than sixty nor less than thirty dollars for the first offense, and for every subsequent like offense to a fine of not more than one hundred dollars nor less than sixty, and the costs of prosecution. The Baptist churches spurned the putting of their necks under such a yoke. They would call the preachers they believed God called and sent to them, even if they had to wait three or six months for the man.

Underlying, therefore, the system of outside proprietorship, there was an earnest protest against unequal laws, and also a

stand for the true scriptural idea of the spirituality of the church. The scriptural idea of the church is that of a company of believers associated for the service of God. It is a spiritual body only. It cannot, therefore, hold property, nor ask nor receive any recognition before the civil law. It only asks that it be not legislated against, nor persecuted or oppressed. This was the view of our fathers. They did not hold their property as they did, merely because the laws were adverse, nor because the sale of sittings was a convenient way of paying for a house; but chiefly because they would not in any way compromise the idea that the church is a purely spiritual body; which they conceived would be done if the church, in its own capacity, had to do with the ownership of property.

About 1834 the adverse laws were repealed; and all the churches of the Commonwealth put upon an equal footing, and no further taxation for church purposes allowed. From that time the church began to let its voice be heard in the management of the property; and indeed to assume something of a control over it. August 12, 1843, the following vote was passed in church meeting:

“Voted; That an alteration be made in the body of the meeting house by erecting side galleries, remove the desk, turn the “slips about, and build a desk at the north end of the house.

“Voted; That Duty S. Tyler, Sanford Blackinton and Samuel Ingalls be a committee to carry into effect the above “vote.”

Here, for the first time, the church ignores the proprietors and assumes the property to be its own.

From this vote it will be seen that in the first brick house, as constructed, the pulpit was at the south end between the doors, and the audience, when sitting, faced the entrance.

The changes proposed were made, also the large wood stoves that had previously been used to heat the house were discarded,



and hot air furnaces put into the basement. The four slips, heretofore noticed as having been bought by the church to be made free, were sold at auction to help pay the cost of the changes.

The next year, 1844, the house was painted and blinds put to the windows.





THE CHURCH THAT WAS BURNED.



THE PRESENT CHURCH.



## The Third House of Worship

---

At this time the membership of the church and the congregation were increasing rapidly, and continued to increase for several years to come. It was soon apparent that additional accommodations must be provided. The first action looking in that direction was on February 25, 1848, as follows:

"An extra church meeting having been notified from the desk, the church met agreeable to appointment. The meeting was opened by reading the scripture and prayer by Bro. Love (Rev. Horace T. Love, then pastor). The object of the meeting was then stated, which was for the purpose of discussing the propriety of rebuilding and enlarging our meeting house. The Standing Committee had examined the subject in several previous meetings and presented their report to the church now assembled, which report was accepted.

"Voted; To choose a committee of five brethren to procure a plan of a meeting house, and an estimate of the probable expense of building, and report at a future meeting.

"Voted; To take immediate measures to have a legal meeting of the pew owners called, and take a legal course in relation to the pews in the present meeting house."

It will be seen here that the old distinction between pews and slips is lost sight of; and also that the church takes the initiative; whereas, in the building of the former house the church took no action, the proprietors acting outside and independent of the church. This change is still more apparent in the action of the church on March 3, 1848:

"Voted; Unanimously that we go forward and rebuild said meeting house according to the terms of the subscription paper, a copy of which is herewith annexed.

"Voted; That the Standing Committee of the church be the Building Committee; and it shall be their duty to report their

"progress at each regular church meeting during the building of  
"said meeting house."

The following is a copy of the subscription paper referred to,  
and the subscriptions thereto, by which the third house was  
built:

"We whose names are underwritten will pay on demand, to  
"the order of the Standing Committee of, the First Baptist  
"Church in North Adams, the several sums set opposite to our  
"respective signatures for the purpose of building and enlarg-  
"ing the Baptist Meeting House in this village, with the under-  
"standing that said house shall be for, and under the control of  
"the First Baptist Church in North Adams, and that said  
"church is to hold in trust the pews thereof for the religious  
"benefit of this community, appraising by its Standing Com-  
"mittee the rents of the same, and causing said rents to be  
"annually exposed at public auction to the highest bidder for  
"choice and appropriating the avails thereof for the purpose  
"of maintaining, preserving and keeping up religious worship  
"in said house and for any contingent expense appertaining  
"thereunto.

"North Adams, December 14, 1847.

CONTRIBUTORS	Contri- butions	PEWS GIVEN IN	Valuation of Pews Given In
Sanford Blackinton .....	\$2000	Four Pews valued at.....	\$115 00
D. S. Tyler.....	1000	Half Pew " ".....	30 00
Samuel Ingalls .....	1000	Two Pews " ".....	100 00
R. H. Wells .....	1000	Two Pews " ".....	107 50
Otis Blackinton.....	125	Three Pews " ".....	115 00
Harriet B. Wells .....	300	.....	.....
Samuel Browning, Jr.....	100	One Pew " ".....	60 00
Salmon Burlingame.....	100	Two Pews " ".....	77 00
Austin Magee .....	100	.....	.....
George Millard.....	300	Five Pews " ".....	125 00
Daniel Sturtevant.....	50	.....	.....
Cole & Ford .....	50	.....	.....
Willard M. Mitchell.....	30	.....	.....
J. Fosket & Son .....	50	.....	.....
O. Loomis .....	25	.....	.....
A. B. Darling .....	25	.....	.....
Erastus L. Bliss .....	25	.....	.....
Henry B. Holden.....	12	.....	.....

CONTRIBUTORS	Contri- butions	PEWS GIVEN IN	Valuation of Pews Given In
Samuel Veazie.....	\$ 15	Half Pew valued at .....	\$25 00
J. L. White.....	50	.....	
C. J. Freeman.....	50	.....	
Elijah Cowan .....	10	.....	
William Ingraham.....	15	.....	
E. D. Whitaker.....	10	.....	
J. P. Bennett.....	25	.....	
Lucius Royce .....	15	.....	
Henry P. Philips .....	10	.....	
William L. Crosier .....	8	.....	
Thomas Bahn.....	25	.....	
W. E. Brayton.....	200	.....	
Total .....	\$6225		

Upon petition of five of the proprietors, Ezra D. Whitaker, Justice of the Peace, issued a warrant to Geo. Millard directing him to notify and warn the said proprietors to meet on the 13th of May, 1848, "to see if the said proprietors will take measures "to remove or take down the present meeting house, and build "a new one in its stead."

Here again the proprietors are recognized, but only to meet a legal necessity.

At this meeting the proprietors

"Voted; That we authorize the Standing Committee of the "First Baptist Church to take down the present meeting house, "and build a new one in its stead."

This was the last meeting ever held by the proprietors. By thus authorizing the church to take down, and thus destroy their property, they virtually withdrew from the further possession and control of it, and gave it up to the church.

The laws of the State had been so modified that now the church, by trustees, could hold the property. That there might afterward spring up no embarrassing question of title, and that the plan contemplated for the future, as set forth in the sub-

scription paper heretofore given, might be fully carried out, the proprietors gave to the church the following deed:

"Whereas, it is proposed to enlarge or rebuild the Baptist Meeting House in this village for the better accommodation of the increasing population, and to construct a suitable lecture room or vestry in the basement of the same, and after said house is completed and ready for use the pews are to be rented annually to meet the expenses of maintaining and keeping up public religious worship in said meeting house; therefore,

"Know all men by these presents that we whose names and seals are hereunto affixed, in consideration of the improvements set forth in the above-named propositions, do for ourselves, our heirs, and assigns, relinquish and forever quit-claim all our right in and title to the slips or any other property we now own and possess in the Baptist Meeting House now occupied by the First Baptist Church in the North Village in Adams; we do freely give, grant, and convey all our interest and title in said estate to the said First Baptist Church for their use and behoof forever.

"Witness our hands and seals this thirteenth day of March, A. D. one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven."

Twenty-nine signatures are attached to this paper.

At a meeting of the church held May 13, 1848, it was

"Voted; That we accept the doings of the proprietors of the First Baptist Meeting House at a meeting held by them this day authorizing the Standing Committee of the First Baptist Church to take down the present meeting house and build a new one."

"Voted; That we accept the quit-claim deed of George Millard and others conveying to the First Baptist Church in North Adams, their pews in the First Baptist Meeting House, in said North Adams village, and hereby agree to fulfil the conditions of said deed, bearing date March 13, 1847."

This deed, however, was not signed by all the proprietors. The Building Committee, in the final detailed report of their

expenditures for the new house, report \$315.92 paid for old slips, to those who did not thus transfer to the church their title and interest.

Thus, by the generosity of most of the proprietors, and the liquidation of the claims of others, the property passed into the possession and under the control of the church, and that without in any way trenching upon the spirituality of the church.

Here and there throughout the Commonwealth there are still churches whose property is owned and controlled by a Society, and the church is only a tenant at will. Might not a change similar to that which was made in North Adams, thirty (now sixty) years ago, and without which the church would probably never have attained its present strength, be made, in many places, to the removal of difficulties, the strengthening of the church, and the furtherance of the work?

The house which the church went on to build is thus described in the annual letter to the Berkshire Association for the year 1848:

"We are building a new meeting house of brick material, "63x93 ft., with 122 slips in the audience room, and galleries "with 38 slips, making 160 slips, capable of seating comfortably "1,000 people. Also a good vestry and other rooms in the basement. We expect to get the vestry finished to worship in the "last of the present month."

During the progress of the work and until the vestry was ready to occupy the church met in Millard's Hall.

In November, 1848, the church occupied the vestry of the new house, and at once by act of the church, a certain rentage was affixed to the slips, and then they were put up at auction for choice, in accordance with the terms of the subscription paper, and of the quit-claim deed given by the former proprietors. The first auction of the pews was on November 27,



1848. Every year since, for thirty years, the pews have been thus offered; the financial burdens have been carried with comparative ease, and peace, harmony and strength have resulted.

September 8, 1849, the house was completed and the building committee made their report to the church. They report the cost of the house \$12,313.44. There had been paid upon the subscriptions \$6,000.26; leaving balance unpaid of \$6,313.18. The church authorized the committee to negotiate a loan, secured by a mortgage upon the property, to the amount of \$5,000; and instructed them to make strenuous efforts to raise the balance of the deficiency by additional subscriptions. Whether it was thus raised or not the records do not show. To the generosity of Sanford Blackinton without whose most liberal subscription the work could not have been undertaken, and to the energy and efficiency of Deacon Duty S. Tyler, Chairman of the Building Committee, the church is largely indebted for the house. Deacon Tyler gave not only money, but time, and thought, and unflinching zeal. With him were associated as members of the building committee, Edward Richmond, S. Ingalls, Geo. Browning, Jr., J. A. Brayton and R. H. Wells, who have gone to their reward; and Sanford Blackinton, and Salmon Burlingame, still members of the church, (in 1878), and Austin Magee and F. W. Waterbury, members of the First Baptist Church at Saratoga Springs.

The house was used in peace and quietude until March, 1854, when it was unroofed by the wind. The damage was repaired at a cost of \$600.

Up to this time the church had owned only the ground on which the house stood. In 1865, it purchased the three lots adjoining the house of worship between it and Eagle street. The cost for the lots and grading was \$3,500.

There was no further incident worthy of note in connection with the church edifice, until June 26, 1871, when Sanford

Blackinton, C. T. Sampson, S. Burlingame, J. Wilbur and E. S. Wilkinson were appointed a building committee to take charge of extensive changes it was proposed to make in the house. The house was enlarged by building on an entirely new front, with a tower and spire. The side galleries were taken out, and an end gallery put in. A new baptistry and new platform and pulpit were put in, and the house refitted throughout. The cost of these changes was about \$24,000, almost twice as much as the house originally cost. The house now stands (1878) substantially as left after these repairs. While these repairs were in progress, the church received and accepted a generous offer of the Congregational Church to occupy their house of worship one-half of the time.

## Doctrines of the Church

---

The council which recognized the church at the time of its organization, the record says, "found them sound in faith." No statement of their doctrinal tenets, however, is given. From this, therefore, we can only conclude that in doctrine the members of the newly constituted church were in harmony with the neighboring Baptist churches, that were represented in the council. Six months after the organization, May 13, 1809, the "church agreed upon articles of faith." The articles thus agreed upon are not in the records. One year afterward, May 10, 1810, the church,

"Reconsidered a vote passed May 13, 1809, respecting articles of faith, and agreed to take the Bible for articles of faith."

During the first quarter of this century, Universalism and Unitarianism made rapid progress throughout New England. They found more or less foot-hold in almost every church. Not far away, Hosea Ballou, the ablest Universalist preacher of New England, found his most fruitful field. The church at North Adams did not escape. Again and again the church found false doctrines creeping in, and at length openly advocated. The defence was, that as the church had taken the Bible for articles of faith, every individual must interpret it for himself; and that his standing in the church should be in no respect impaired by any interpretation whatsoever. The church as a body was unchanged in its convictions of religious truth; but as it had no declared belief, its power of discipline was greatly impaired. In 1821, a member of the church of some prominence and influence, who was able to form a strong party, came out, in the words of the records, as an advocate of "the doctrines of the Universal Salvation of all mankind." A kind let-



ter of admonition was sent to him by the church. He gave no heed. The following "second letter of admonition" was read before the church, approved, and sent to him :

"Dear Brother :

"According to the doctrines of Paul to Titus—third chapter, "tenth and eleventh verses, 'a man that is an heretic after the "first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is "such is subverted and sinneth, being condemned of himself,"— "we hereby admonish you to cast away your pernicious princi- "ples, throw away your vain, subverting books, and doctrines of "devils, and repent of your condemning heresies. Remember "that the Apostle said, 'He that preacheth any other gospel let "him be accursed.' Dear brother, if you do not come to our "next church meeting, which will be two weeks from this day, "at one o'clock p. m., we shall be under the painful necessity "of withdrawing the hand of fellowship from you.

"Done by order and in behalf of the church.

"GIDEON MIXER, Church Clerk.

"To ——— ———.

"March 17, 1821."

The men who could write, approve, and send, such a letter as that, certainly had some very positive articles of faith from which they did not propose that their church should be subverted.

The brother addressed did not appear, as cited, and the hand of fellowship was withdrawn. Immediately certain friends of the excluded brother made issue with the church; that inas- much as the church had by vote set aside its articles of faith, and now had none, it could not rightfully exclude one for fol- lowing the Bible as he understood it; indeed, that the church had expressly authorized him so to do by rejecting its own creed, and taking the Bible in its stead. After two years of labor and admonition over this point, the leader of the dissen- tients was also excluded.

Another similar case occurred in February, 1828, when the fellowship of the church was withdrawn from another brother for holding the same doctrines.

These and other incidents of the same kind through a period of eighteen years, together with the tendency which at that time was so marked toward Unitarianism and liberalism, and among some of our own ministers, toward a desecration, or a denying of the claims, of the Christian Sabbath, satisfied the church that for the sake of the truth to which it firmly held, and for the establishing and continuance of the church in that truth, as well as for the maintenance of discipline, it was wisest and best to have a formulated expression of its understanding of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.

Accordingly, at a meeting of the church held October 3, 1828, the following action was taken:

"The church proceeded to business, and took up the subject 'of faith and practice.

"Voted; To adopt the articles of faith and practice as they 'now read."

This wording "as they now read" implies that the articles were neither a new compilation, nor a new presentation to the church, but something with which the church was already familiar. It is altogether probable, therefore, that these articles adopted in 1828, were the same that the church had adopted in 1809, and abrogated in 1810. The articles then adopted are given in the records and read as follows:

"ARTICLES OF FAITH AND PRACTICE."

*(Adopted October 3, 1828.)*

"1. We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men "divinely inspired; that it is a perfect rule of faith and practice; "and that among others it teaches the following important "truths:

"1st. That there is one only living and true God, infinite in every natural and moral excellence.

"2d. That He has revealed Himself as the Father, and the Son (or Word) and the Holy Ghost the same in essence and equal in divine qualities.

"3d. That man was created Holy; but that by wilfully violating the law of his Maker, he fell from that state; so that by nature there is in us no holiness; but we are all inclined to evil, and 'in that all have sinned,' and are children of wrath, 'justly exposed to death and other miseries, temporal, spiritual and eternal.

"4th. That the only way of salvation from this state of guilt and condemnation is through the righteousness and atonement of Jesus Christ, the Word, who miraculously assumed our nature without sin, or became incarnate, for the suffering of death and whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, having 'so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

"5th. That all who are brought to repentance and faith were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world; and that in consequence, not of their own merit but of God's own purpose and grace, the Holy Ghost (without whose influence none would ever repent and believe), performs the work of regeneration in their hearts.

"6th. That nothing can separate true believers from the love of God, but they will be 'kept by the power of God through faith unto Salvation,' the sure and final proof of their being true believers consisting in the continuance of their attachment and obedience to Christ till the close of life.

"7th. That the only proper subjects of the ordinance of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are professed believers; and that Baptism is properly administered only by immersion, and is 'by scriptural example, a prerequisite to communion at the Lord's table.

"8th. That according to the example of the Apostles and disciples sanctioned by the repeated presence of Christ himself, 'after his resurrection, the first day of the week is to be observed as the Lord's day, or Christian Sabbath.

*9th.* That there will be a resurrection of the just and the unjust, and that the Lord Jesus Christ will come to judge both the living and the dead; when those who have continued or died impenitent and unreconciled to God, will be sentenced to endless punishment, according to the desert of their sins; and those who have truly repented and turned to God, relying solely on the merits of him who died, the just for the unjust, will be completely delivered from the dominion of sin, and be admitted into the holy and heavenly Jerusalem with songs and everlasting joy; so shall they be ever with the Lord."

It will be seen at once that these articles are uncompromisingly Calvinistic. There is no taint nor tinge of modern liberalism here, or the shadow of a divergence from the purest Pauline, Augustinian, or Calvinistic theology. The inspiration of scripture, the unity in trinity of the godhead, man's utterly lost estate, the incarnation of the Son and Salvation through faith in Him, the sovereignty of God in redemption, the perseverance of the saints, the immersion of believers, and that, prerequisite to the communion the sanctity of the Lord's day, the resurrection from the dead, the final judgment, and the heavenly home,—these were the great doctrines upon which the church at North Adams was founded, upon which it has been built, and from which it has never swerved.

This Calvinism was the furthest possible removed from fatalism. It did not supersede effort, but aroused, stimulated and made it efficacious. The church bowed in profound awe and reverence before God's sovereignty, while at the same time it magnified human agency. It believed in man's absolute inability to turn to God and to serve him except as led thereto by the Holy Spirit. Yet it was one of the first and most liberal supporters of Judson's mission in Burmah, and has ever labored without stint or grudging for the dissemination of gospel truth and the bringing of men to the cross of the Lord Jesus.

In the year 1872 these articles were slightly modified and given the form in which they now appear in the printed manual of the church. The revision then made was of the wording rather than of the doctrines. The substance and essential statement of no doctrine was changed.

It was not enough that the church have a correct form of Christian doctrine. It was important that the members know what those doctrines were. A printed manual is laid away, and but rarely read. A frequent rehearsal in the hearing of the church must of necessity familiarize the church with its doctrinal formulas. With this in view, on October 9, 1841, it was "Voted, That our Articles of Faith and Covenant be read at "every covenant meeting." The covenant meeting was held every two months. Thus six times every year, for we know not how long, the church listened to the reading of its entire doctrinal statement. This might by some be deemed heavy and wearisome. But it grounded men in the faith. It put in their hands and accustomed them to the weapons which they must use in their battles for the truth.

The church did not hesitate at any time to *declare* of what kind its faith was. The next year following that in which the preceding articles were adopted, a communication was received asking information in regard to the church, to be incorporated into an Ecclesiastical Register. The first item of information given is in these words: "The church is of the Calvinistic order."

But there were some, then as now, to whom these doctrines were distasteful. The church felt itself called upon, and compelled, to be a defender of the faith. It must not only hold to the truth itself, but must let its voice be heard and its attitude known as it saw the encroachments of error. Soon after the organization of the church in the year 1809 the church was



received into the Shaftsbury Association. Upon the formation of the Berkshire Association, in 1827, from considerations of local convenience, and for the better promotion of the cause in its own county, it withdrew from the Shaftsbury and became a constituent member of the new association. At that time Elder John Leland was a pastor in the Berkshire Association, and at the height of his fame and influence. He, and others under his lead in the association, taught that the Sabbath had passed away with the Jewish law, and was no more sacred than any other day. He sometimes showed his contempt for one of the most cherished doctrines of his brethren, by carrying his grist to mill, or having his horse shod, or working part of the day in the field on the Christian Sabbath.

He was accustomed to baptize, and especially when upon his widely extended preaching tours, all who would receive baptism without bringing them within the pale of the church, without asking for other separation from the world than that implied in the act of baptism, and often when those baptized openly declared they did not intend to unite themselves with the people of God. There were thus scattered throughout all this section men and women with no connection with the churches, and who never had any, who never attended worship, never joined with the people of God in prayer and praise, never co-operated in Christian work, and who yet were professedly baptized Christians, satisfied with themselves, and in not a few instances carping at the fact of the very existence of an organized Christian church.

At the same time the doctrine that the nature of man was not so very bad, and that it was only necessary to develop the good and repress the evil, thus practically ignoring or denying the necessity of regeneration, was creeping into the churches. These things were shocking to the North Adams church. Moved by these things, the church sent the following most admirable

letter, full of admonition, reproof, instruction and vigorous protest to the Berkshire Association, held May 31, 1832. The moral courage and boldness of the little band that sent this letter will be better understood if it be remembered that Leland was at this time by far the most influential member of the association and a majority of the churches gave him their fullest sympathy:

“Beloved Brethren: We witness with joy the prospects of the “church of Christ in various sections of the earth, both at home “and abroad. Our hearts are refreshed in hearing of the “abundant success which attends the missionary efforts at the “several stations and more especially the Burman mission. “While we thus speak of the joy of our hearts because of the “general prosperity of Zion, we have a thought which we wish “to express that more immediately concerns the peace and pros- “perity of this body of churches. We have witnessed the slow “innovations of doctrine and practice for some time past with “fearful apprehensions of what might be the result. Not that “we would resist light on any point of Christian practice; but “we are far from believing that the administration of grace, or “that the hearts of men are very much, if any, different at this “age of the world than what they were at the commencement “of the gospel of our Lord. We apprehend that there is too “much of men’s wisdom intermingled, not only with the truth “of the gospel, but with its administration, or preaching. We “learn from the sacred scriptures, ‘that the natural man *receiveth not* the things of the Spirit of God; for they are *foolishness* unto him; neither *can he know* them because they are “spiritually discerned’ (1 Cor. 2:14); therefore the necessity “of being ‘born again’ in order to see the kingdom (John “3:3); ‘for what man knoweth the things of a man save the “spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God “*knoweth no man*, but the Spirit of God’ (1 Cor. 2:11). “The complete alienation of affection of the unreconciled heart “is a truth that ought to be exhibited with, at least, as much “force and certainty as expressed in the sacred Bible, which “uses illustrations of the most convincing character, such as



“being *dead* in trespasses and sins,’ ‘ye *will* not come unto me  
“that ye might have light,’ ‘the carnal mind is *enmity* against  
“God.’ Such like expressions are unequivocal and incontro-  
“vertible. If we err on this point of Christian doctrine, we are  
“liable to err on almost every other truth, for without a just  
“view of the depravity of the human heart, or affection, we are  
“not prepared to properly understand the necessity and opera-  
“tions of the Holy Spirit ‘to renew us in the spirit of our mind’  
“and to create the new man, which, after God is created in  
“righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:23, 24). The meta-  
“physical dogmas of the present day are not new, but doctrines  
“long since exploded. We believe and must believe so long as  
“the sacred pages are accessible and we are permitted to read  
“the same, that no man ‘can see the kingdom of God except he  
“be born again,’ neither can he be recognized as a member of  
“the Church of Christ on earth, unless ‘he be born of water  
“and the Spirit.’ We must, also, believe that ‘Christ is ex-  
“alted as a Prince and Saviour’ as much to give *repentance* as  
“the remission of sins. The sovereignty or independence of  
“Christ in the giving of eternal life as expressed in John 17:2,  
“3, is a doctrine that ought to be and will be, we think, taught  
“by every faithful minister of the gospel. Beloved brethren,  
“we not only deplore the laxity of doctrine, but also the preva-  
“lence of baptizing individuals without a special reference to  
“becoming connected with the church; because it tends to let in  
“a flood of error not easily prevented. It lays a foundation for  
“any one and every one that there is no necessity and of course  
“no utility of ever becoming connected with the people of God.  
“If this were to become the prevailing sentiment where would  
“be the public or visible appearance of the church. Is not one  
“person as much at liberty to stand disconnected with the  
“church as another? Are some few, here and there one, under  
“the necessity of publicly maintaining the cause of Christ?  
“The practice of baptizing without a determination to join the  
“church is, as we apprehend, calculated in this way to prostrate  
“in a slow and distressing manner the public honors of Christ.  
“Brethren, we are confident that union is the strength of any  
“body and is only designed to promote peace and harmony, and  
“our prayer is that there may be a frankness of consultation

“on these several topics before there shall be here and there by  
“one and another an effort to commence some new practice and  
“inculcate some new doctrine. We pray the great Head of the  
“Church to grant us all as churches, and as individuals that  
“wisdom, prudence and every other principle of grace that shall  
“enable us to act with a wise reference to his glory and the  
“especial promotion of his cause.”

The tendency to liberalism appears however to have gone on. An informal meeting of brethren that loved the old doctrines was held at Cheshire for consultation. It was determined by these brethren to call a convention composed of delegates from all the churches in the Association, for further and more authoritative consideration and action.

With the view expressed in that call the North Adams church fully sympathized. Delegates were sent to the convention.

But consultation and remonstrance did not satisfy the church. It was convinced that there had been a radical departure from the faith on the part of some of the churches, which by its continuance in the Association it would virtually approve. It, therefore, formally withdrew from the Association in May, 1834. The following is its letter of withdrawal, written by Loring Darby, their church clerk, and approved by the church:

“The Baptist Church of Christ in North Adams to the Berkshire County Baptist Association, sendeth Christian salutation.

“Dear Brethren: We enjoy a good degree of union among  
“ourselves and Christian fellowship towards those who love  
“our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. It will doubtless be remembered that in 1832 and 1833 we as a church entered our  
“protest against the innovations which were fast creeping into  
“some of the churches of the Association. What we then  
“feared has been more than realized; we did not expect that  
“there would have been quite so general and extensive a departure in doctrine and practice from the faith once delivered  
“to the Saints, as is at present too evident. We know that the

“course of sin in any form is rapid and diffusive. We know “that it is deceitful, promising better things at the expense and “in the face of truth.

“We, as a church, disapprove of the course pursued by some “of the churches and ministers of the Association, feeling that “we ought to be governed by the Word of God, which says, “‘Mark them which cause divisions,’ &c., Rom. 16:17, and “which commands us, 2 Thess. 3:6, to withdraw ourselves, &c. “We wish, therefore, to withdraw from the Association. It is “no pleasure to be associated with those who differ from us so “materially in the fundamental truths of the Gospel; but trust- “ing in the protection of Him who preserved the Burning Bush, “we would rather obey his voice who says, Isaiah 26:20, 21, “‘Come, my people,’ &c. The promises of the Scriptures are “precious to us. More so than the friendship of those who “compass sea and land to make one proselyte. And when we “hear the exhortation to those who fear the Lord, that obey “the voice of his servant, &c., Isa. 50:10, we feel its quickening “influence and rejoice. And at the same time we would not be “forgetful that the same voice hath said, 11th verse, ‘Behold all “ye that kindle a fire,’ &c. Better is little with the fear of the “Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith. ‘Better is a “dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred “therewith.’ Prov. 15:16, 17. The Society of those who will “contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the Saints, “Jude 3d, is our choice. We had rather not know, and be “unknown, than to experience the trouble there has been in “consequence of certain doctrines and efforts in this county “the year past. We would rather enjoy the portion broken “unto us, though in the estimation of some, like herbs, in love “and union, than the profusion of good things which is sup- “posed to be possessed by many, and the hatred, strife and “contention, which has in almost every instance accompanied “the same. Knowing that our Redeemer has the promise of a “seed to serve Him and that He shall be satisfied, we pray ‘thy “kingdom come; Thy will be done,’ unto this end, that the Lord “will send faithful laborers into his harvest, and that the world “may be filled with the knowledge of the Lord.”

The church made application to and was received by the Stephentown Association. It remained a member of that Association five years, until October 10, 1839, when it returned to the Berkshire Association. The first letter to the Association after the return of the church is not given in the records. In the associational minutes for that year this brief extract is given, "Believing the cause of our grief to be removed from this Association, we request readmission, that we may become workers together." The letter sent to the Association the following year, 1840, is on record, and strikes the old note in ringing words as follows:

"Our views of the doctrines of the gospel are unchanged. We still believe that if saved at last and made heirs of heaven, it will be purely by the grace of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; and if finally lost, it will be through our own neglect to obey the injunctions of the gospel. For we believe the provision in the atonement is abundant for all, and all that will may come, and partake of the water of life freely."

Again in the letter to the Association the next year, 1841, written by Deacon Richmond, the church says:

"As a body we live in union and adhere to the great doctrines of the Bible. Under the spirit they are our waymarks, our chart and compass. We are unshaken in the belief that man by nature is destitute of holiness, and that a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. Therefore we believe all that are brought to repentance and faith were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world; and, that in consequence not of their own merits, but of God's own purpose and grace; the Holy Spirit, without whose influence none would ever repent and believe, performs the work of regeneration in the heart. Consequently and inseparably joined with this, we hold that nothing can separate true believers from the love of God, but they will be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. The sure and final proof of their being true believers consists in their attachment and obedience to Christ till the

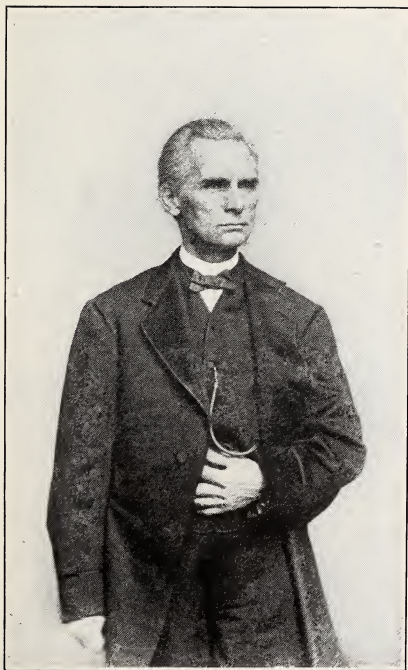
“end of life. Nor are we the least shaken from the belief that “the only proper subjects of the ordinance of baptism and the “Lord’s Supper are professed believers; and that immersion is “the only Bible mode of baptism. We hold that the first day “of the week is to be strictly kept as the Lord’s day, or Christian Sabbath; and we have great occasion for sorrow when we “see it violated, especially by those professing the Christian “character.”

Again, in the letter to the association for the next year, 1842, also written by Deacon Richmond, we find the following:

“While we deplore the fallen, ruined state of man, his indisposition to seek after holiness, his inability to will against will, “we rejoice in the agency of the Holy Spirit in accomplishing “this great work in bringing the sinner to see his lost condition, “turning the current of his mind, and presenting Christ as his “only hope of salvation and acceptance with the Father.”

Thus the church earnestly contended for the faith once delivered to the Saints. Nor was this unyielding fidelity of the church its unswerving course, and its remarkably clear and positive statements of doctrine, merely, as is sometimes the case, because it was following the lead of a pastor. The most remarkable thing about the doctrinal controversy which resulted in severing associational relations is, that during the time it was in progress, the church had five different pastors. Elder Keyes was pastor when the letter of remonstrance was sent to the Association in 1832. Elder Palmer was pastor when the church withdrew from the Berkshire Association in 1834; Elder Covel was pastor while the church was connected with the Stephen-town Association; Elder Rogers was pastor when the church returned to the Berkshire Association in 1839, and Elder Alden was pastor when the letters of 1840 and 1841, quoted above, were written. The pastors came and went; but the church held unchangingly to the old doctrines of grace, and, with or without a pastor, knew well how to express and defend them.





REV. LEMUEL COVELL.





The church has from the very beginning, through all its history, held uncompromisingly to the peculiar tenets of the Baptists. Of this the Articles of Faith, already given, are a sufficient proof. It will be necessary to illustrate only a few points.

The church has ever insisted strenuously upon its absolute independence of all external interference or influence. In 1834, the year the church withdrew from the Berkshire Association, the Association accepted certain *articles of faith*, not as authoritative or binding, but in the words of the resolution adopted, to "present them to the churches for their consideration and approval; the churches to present their approval or "disapproval in their letters to the next Association." The articles having been approved by the Association, the Association having sent them to the churches, a church that could not approve, would, by that inability, be put in doctrinal disagreement with the Association. The Association, therefore, became to a degree a tribunal to sit in judgment upon the doctrinal tenets of the several churches composing it. This the North Adams Church deemed to be an assumption of powers that did not belong to it. This was one of the items that influenced the church in withdrawing from the Association; for although the articles were not accepted by the Association until after the letter of the church withdrawing was written, a committee to prepare the articles had been appointed two years before, and some of the churches were urging the Association thus to judge, as the North Adams Church believed, their sister churches.

The same matter came up again in 1847. At a church meeting held September 11th, the church "Voted to instruct our "delegates attending the Association to vote against the adoption "of a church covenant or articles of faith, as being inconsistent "with the powers of the Association." Thus the church not only

held to the independent form of church government, but was exceedingly jealous of its independence, and aroused by the least suspicion of encroachment.

The North Adams Church is a strictly democratic body, in which all matters of general interest are laid before the assembled church and determined by a majority vote.

And the right of all members, without respect to age or sex, to a voice in the affairs of the church has always been recognized. At different times the question came up whether it were not wiser to limit the right to vote in church meetings to the male members. In 1821, after discussion, the following vote was passed:

“Voted that the sisters have a right to vote in our meetings.”

The question was again mooted in 1870, when the church again voted that there should be no limitation in the suffrages of the members. The only exception is that when the present manual was adopted it was provided that on all questions touching financial affairs, only male members of full age should be entitled to vote.

The church has ever held that both logically, and by a scriptural teaching and example, baptism precedes the Lord's Supper; hence that none can rightfully participate in the Lord's Supper until baptized.

As a Baptist Church, it has of course, without a shadow of variation, held that there can be no scriptural baptism without immersion—burial with Christ in baptism—and that, in accordance with scripture teaching and the uniform usage of the apostolic churches, baptism can be rightfully administered only to those who are old enough to profess their faith in Christ, and actually do so.

The Articles of Faith originally adopted, affirm that “baptism is properly administered by immersion, to professed be-

"lievers in Christ, and is by scriptural example, a prerequisite 'to communion at the Lord's table.'" This article is left unchanged in the revision of the articles made in 1872.

The question as to open or close communion, or as to the subjects, or the mode of baptism, so far as the records show, has never arisen in the church. Every pronouncement of the church on either of those points has been as clear and positive as if there were no possibility in any mind of question or doubt.

In its early days the church held that none could rightfully come to the communion, although members in good standing in other Baptist churches, who were not under the discipline of the church. In 1809, Martin Salisbury, a member of a Baptist church in another place, though residing in North Adams, was about to remove. The church

"Voted: To give Martin Salisbury a few lines manifesting 'our joy at his orderly walk with us, though he had not been 'admitted to communion, because he had no letter.'"

And conversely, if any member of another Baptist church *did* come to the communion, that act was held to make it necessary for the church to extend its watchcare over such communicant. For example, under date of November 4, 1811, we find this entry:

"Voted to choose a committee to labor with — so far as is 'consistent to labor with her as a member of another church, 'but who has communed with us, and make report to the 'church of their labor.'"

The sister referred to had been accused of a crime. The church assumed that because she had communed with them, she by that act put herself under their supervision. The committee ordered was appointed, and subsequently made a report to the church. The church thereupon

"Voted, to report Sister ——— to the church where she 'belongs for unchristian conduct.'"

But even where Baptists living in North Adams had not communed with the church, the church deemed it its duty, and took it upon itself, to look after them. On January 3, 1824, the church "Chose Brother Mixer and Brother Blackinton to visit "Brother —— and wife, members of a sister church, and admonish them to their duty." The admonition was evidently not heeded; for on the 31st of the same month the church

"Voted to write a letter to Whatley church respecting Brother "——— and wife." If all our churches at the present day were to pursue a similar course, simply assume that all of the same faith and order residing near them were thereby under their watchcare, to be led along in the path of duty, or to be reported for discipline to the churches of which they are members, the oft recurring and perplexing question as to how to deal with non-resident members would be solved, and a vastly greater number of them would be led to identify themselves at once with churches near which they reside.

While the church has always insisted that baptism should precede communion, it has never insisted that the baptism must necessarily have been administered by a Baptist minister. Many cases appear in the records of persons received into membership upon a statement of their Christian experience, who had been immersed in the Methodist, Advent or other churches.

Although the church has regarded those who have received sprinkling for baptism, as not having obeyed the Lord in the first ordinance of his house, yet it has ever regarded them as brethren in Christ, honored and beloved for the image of the Master that is manifest in them, and for their work's sake; and it has ever bidden them God-speed in all their efforts to serve their common Lord and Master. In accordance with this feeling of brotherhood and oneness of interest, when it was proposed to constitute a Congregational Church in North Adams, the Baptist Church proffered the use of its house of worship

for the meeting of the council and for the public exercises. It was in the Baptist house that the Congregational Church was recognized by council, and thence it went forth with a hearty Baptist blessing.

For thirty years past the church has been accustomed to give to any of its members who might desire to unite with other denominations Certificates of Standing, differing but little from ordinary Letters of Dismission. The Church Manual gives a form for such certificates, and is as follows:

“This is to certify that A. B. is a member of the First Baptist Church in North Adams, Mass., and sustains a good Christian character; but entertaining a different opinion from us on Christian Doctrine, and having expressed a desire to unite with the ——— Church, in ——— he (she) is hereby permitted to withdraw from us for that purpose; and when we are informed of his (her) union with said church, his (her) connection with this church will be dissolved. This certificate shall be null and void, if not used for the above purpose within three months.”



## Associational Connection

---

January 7, 1809, seven months after its organization, the church was received into the Shaftsbury Association, at the annual meeting at Schodac, New York. That association then numbered thirty-three churches in Southern Vermont, Western Massachusetts and Eastern New York, and extending into Canada. The membership of the association then numbered 3,303.

At the annual meeting, held at East Hillsdale in 1826, Elder Beach, pastor at Pittsfield, "in behalf of some of the Berkshire churches, asked leave to form a new association. The request "was granted." Thereupon the North Adams, Cheshire, Pittsfield, Savoy, Sandisfield and Williamstown churches withdrew. On the 31st of May, 1827, these, with the Adams Church, which had been established the year before, and the Windsor, Lanesboro and Hinesdale churches, met at the West Meeting House, in Cheshire, and organized the Berkshire Association. Thus at the first annual session fifteen churches were reported, with a total membership of 861. The largest church in the association at that time was the Savoy church, with 101 members.

The North Adams church remained a member of this association until, by reason of doctrinal differences already noticed, it withdrew and was received into the Stephentown Association at its session in Hancock in 1834. In the minutes of the Berkshire Association for 1834 is this entry:

"N. B.—The church in North Adams withdrew from the "association because of the innovation of doctrine and practice "on the part of a number of the churches and ministers of the "association."

Thus the association itself concedes that the charge of the North Adams church was correct; that there had been innovations, both of doctrine and practice.

The church remained in connection with this association five years. But at the annual session of the Berkshire Association, held at Tyringham in 1839, the church appeared by its delegates and asked to be readmitted, "believing the cause of grief to be removed." The church was received and has continued a member of the association to the present day.

The church has ever been ready to extend its hospitality to associational gatherings. In 1820 the Shaftsbury Association, then numbering twenty-six churches, with 3,377 members, held its annual session in North Adams; and in 1832 the Berkshire Association, with sixteen churches, 1,233 members, met in North Adams; in 1838 the Stephentown Association, with seventeen churches and 1,518 members, met with this church; and in 1849 the Berkshire Association, with nineteen churches and 1,648 members, and again in 1869, with eighteen churches and 2,066 members. From this it will be seen that the largest associational gathering that ever met with the church was the first, in 1820.

## Discipline

---

To a remarkable degree the church has, from the first, been unwearied in watching over its members, faithful in dealing with delinquents, and zealous in maintaining its purity. To this, probably, more than to any other one thing, may be ascribed its healthful, vigorous life. By their fidelity in discipline the fathers of the church laid a solid foundation for future enlargement. In the early days the members were expected to attend regularly the Sabbath services, the Covenant meetings and the Lord's supper, and to live, in all their intercourse and relations with others, temperately, soberly and righteously. If one failed in any of these points his case was at once taken up by the church, upon the presentation of the fact by any member. As the church increased in members it was found impossible to determine always who were and who were not present at the meetings. It was accordingly ordered, on October 9, 1841, "That an account be taken of the members present at all Covenant and church meetings."

About four months after the organization of the church a standing committee was appointed, "to search into any matter of difficulty or complaint." This was, in fact, a committee on discipline. But, in addition to this, special committees were appointed on special cases as they arose. The first case of discipline that appears in the records will illustrate the methods adopted and the fidelity, tempered with forbearance, that was shown. Under date of December 20, 1809, is the following:

"Called upon a committee, viz., Elder Witherell, Otis Blackinton and Gideon Mixer, that was sent to labor with D——  
"D—— for neglect of travel. Heard their report. Accepted of their labor.

"Voted to send another committee to take another labor with him.

"August 16, 1810. Heard report of committee authorized to "visit D—— D——, December 21, 1809. Satisfied with their "labor. Agreed to send him a letter of admonition by Otis "Blackinton, a copy of which is as follows, viz.:

"Dear Brother: As you have never traveled with the church "in gospel ordinances since you joined with us, we feel our- "selves bound in duty, after the repeated labor with you accord- "ing to the gospel rule, to admonish you to attend to your duty, "and to the covenant you made with your brethren, and the "vows you made with your God. It is a painful task to lay a "brother, and one who ought to be a father in Israel, under "admonition. But we must lay aside feelings which do not "correspond to the gospel and attend to the gospel rule. There- "fore, dear brother, we by this letter call upon you to come and "see your brethren, and meet with them in the Covenant meet- "ings, and inform them what your feelings towards them are; "and if you feel a desire to walk with them according to the "rule of the gospel, and to attend to gospel ordinances, mani- "fest it to them and inform them what the difficulty is that you "have so long neglected your duty, and take up your cross and "follow with them in the ordinances of the gospel. If this "friendly admonition has no influence, we must put discipline "in force and withdraw our fellowship from you. O brother, "did we let our natural feelings rule we should neglect the "order of the gospel and the rule of discipline; but we feel a "desire to do honor to the cause of our Dear Redeemer.

"Signed in behalf of the church.

"GIDEON MIXER, Church Clerk.

"North Adams, August 19, 1810."

After this nothing was done in the case that was put on record for nearly a year. The next mention is under date of July 6, 1811:

"Took up the case of D—— D——, and finding still some "brethren with some drawings towards him, postponed the "matter of excommunication till the Saturday preceding the "second Sunday in August."

August 10, 1811. "Took up the matter of D—— D——, and "after some deliberation adjourned to September 7."

The church met according to adjournment and adjourned to October 12th. On that day adjourned again to October 13th; then again to the 24th; then still again to November 4th, on which date is the following entry:

"Took up the matter of D—— D——, and after calling upon "the brethren and hearing their observations, and D—— D—— "not being present, we voted him a letter of excommunication.

"Voted Elder Witherell should write the letter of excommunication."

Then, under date of November 9th:

"Chose Elder Witherell to carry the above letter of excommunication to D—— D——."

Thus the hand of fellowship was withdrawn from D—— D—— for the reason that he failed to "travel with the church." But before it was done his case was two years under consideration, at eleven church meetings; he was waited upon by two special committees, and received from the church a letter of admonition. All this to induce him, if possible, to walk orderly with the church. When it was evident, and not till then, that all efforts were vain, the church withdrew from him.

In church discipline our fathers used the word "*labor*" in a sense that has now become nearly, if not quite, obsolete. The church, or a committee, in dealing with delinquents, previous to final action, were said to "*labor*" with them. On January 12, 1814, the church, in church meeting, "called on Sister Hodge "to know what success she had in laboring with Sister ——." Sister Hodge stated that "she had labored with her, but got "no satisfaction." On August 13th the same case came up again in this way:

"Took up the labor about Sister ——. Voted to drop "this business on account of some brethren feeling to do "some labor with her." When the church took up a case of dis-



cipline it was said "to take up labor" with the brother; and persons under discipline were said "to be under labor." The language, to most modern ears, is peculiar; but it is thoroughly expressive of the effort made by the church to save the weak or restore the erring. The church did really labor with them.

In a like peculiar manner the word "*travel*" was technically used. Persons were again and again "put under labor" because they did not "*travel*." In one place we read, Brother —— came before the church, confessed, and took up his "*travel*." In another place, "Brother —— came forward and manifested a desire to travel, so far as he could see his way clear."

For the first quarter of a century, or more, the term "*excommunication*" was used, as it appears above. At a later period this term does not occur, but the more appropriate and correct expression "withdrawn from" or "withdraw the hand of fellowship from" are used in its stead.

Letters of *admonition* were usually sent in all cases of discipline, but not until after a committee had failed to secure satisfaction. A number of these letters are copied into the records. The tone varies with the peculiarities of each case. Some are mild and persuasive; others are short, sharp and decisive. We have already given one such when showing how the church dealt with those holding the doctrines of the Universalists.

Sometimes these letters were for offenses that in modern times would not have been deemed very grave. As, for instance, on March 30, 1820, the church voted to send letters of admonition to a brother and his wife for going away without taking letters of dismission to the church near to which they had removed. Indeed sometimes for such offense the church went even further. In 1824, the church voted to send "Letters of



Exclusion" to three persons "for a breach of covenant in going away from us and not taking letters."

In the fulness of its charity the church usually assumed that those who neglected its services or absented themselves from its worship might have been wronged by the church. They were, therefore, in the first instance called upon to come before the church and state their "*grievance.*" If this call were in vain, they were laid under admonition. After letters of admonition were sent, the delinquent frequently came in response, and made acknowledgment and confession. If satisfactory the church then passed a vote of satisfaction. If, however, the transgression were public and notorious, the transgressor was sometimes required to make a public confession. In case of one who had openly sinned and who came and confessed to the church, the church, the records say,

"Voted to forbear at present, admonishing him to make public confession of his evils."

Every possible opportunity was given to members who sinned to repent and confess, and to return to their allegiance to God and to his church. For this purpose the several steps were often taken very slowly; the church never losing sight of the issue, nor ceasing its efforts! and that even where fellowship had been actually withdrawn, in the hope that the wanderer might return. Thus in one case a person was excluded on March 6, 1824. The matter rested then until February 5, 1825, when the church voted that a Letter of Excommunication be sent. Thus it stood until April 2, when the church appointed a committee to write the Letter of Excommunication. No further action was taken till August 5, when it appearing that the offender could not be induced to return to the church, the committee read to the church the Letter they had prepared. It was approved and ordered to be delivered. Thus a year and five

months passed after the vote of exclusion; during which time the case was brought three times before the church, before the act of separation was deemed to be fully consummated. And after that the church was ever ready to restore every one who should return to an orderly walk with the church.

In administering its discipline the church in the olden time carried its supervision into all the details of the every day life of every member. Persons were called to account for not paying their bills at the grocers; for not paying notes of hand; for not keeping business engagements, and for any and everything which occasioned variance between brethren, or which, before the public, brought a brother into disrepute, or brought a reproach upon the church. When the parties in interest in any difference were both members of the church, they were permitted to state the case, each in his own behalf, and present any proof or evidence they might desire. The church then expressed by vote its opinion as to where the right lay, and enforced its judgment, if necessary, by admonition and excommunication. Thus under date of October 22, 1822, we read:

"Brother Cummings brings a complaint against Brother Wm. Balcomb for not paying him his just debt.

"Received the complaint.

"Brother Balcomb came forward and said he claimed it of Brother Cummings for giving a wrong judgment against him as a magistrate.

"Proceeded to hear them.

"Voted that Brother Balcomb's excuse for not paying Brother Cummings was not sufficient, and that he is bound to pay the note which Brother Cummings holds against him for about seven dollars.

"Brother Balcomb refuses to comply and reflects upon the brethren for giving such a judgment.

"Voted to put Brother Balcomb under admonition for not complying with the decision of the church, in not paying the debt and for reflections on the church."

The next mention is under date of January 4, 1823.

“Voted to send Brother Wm. Balcomb a letter of admonition to appear at our next meeting and remove his wrong or “we shall proceed against him.”

The difficulty was thereupon adjusted.

In other cases when the matter was complicated the church named certain brethren to serve as referees, or arbitrators, and required the parties to abide by their decision.

At different times when brethren were financially embarrassed, and there was danger of their failing to meet their obligations and thereby of compromising their reputations for uprightness and integrity, their difficulties were laid voluntarily before the church, and a committee appointed to advise with them in regard to their temporal affairs. Thus as honest men, desirous of dealing justly and doing right, they bore one another's burdens.

The church, however, avoided occupying itself with trifling issues that might be presented by first voting whether it would entertain a complaint or request. And when, as was sometimes the case, it found itself discussing a groundless issue it meted out justice with a very even hand. On one occasion a brother and a sister of the church got into personal difficulty. The sister charged the brother with lying. A committee was appointed to investigate. They reported the charge not sustained. The church thereupon passed the following vote:

“Voted, that Brother —— be reprov'd for want of patience, and Sister —— for want of prudence.”

That which occasioned the church the most trouble, which has brought before it more cases of discipline than anything else, is intemperance.

From the organization of the church, although it was many years before the Washington temperance movement, and was

when alcoholic drinks were a common beverage in almost every family, intoxication was deemed an offence meriting the severest discipline. Again and again has the church been called to see the wreck and the loss of those that it loved and honored. It has mourned and admonished and disciplined in vain. From time to time the sad scenes continued to be enacted, and blasted lives and ruined souls went forth, even from the Church of Christ, to run a brief course of sin and go down to physical and moral death. Will society also ever learn to look upon drunkenness as a crime, and upon him that makes gain out of the producing of it as its very worst offender? God speed the day.

That which next to drunkenness has been most frequently a course of discipline has been the amusement of dancing. The church has ever regarded this as inconsistent and incompatible with the Christian life. In the first four volumes of the records no less than twenty-three cases appear in which dancing was before the church as a matter of discipline; and among the many cases of discipline for "unchristian conduct" others doubtless refer to this. The hand of fellowship has been repeatedly withdrawn from those who preferred indulgence in a mere amusement to acquiescing in the judgment and mind of the church with regard to it. For fifty years, however, the church never deviated, but regarded ball-going and dancing as so inconsistent with the Christian profession as to call for confession and renunciation or exclusion from the fellowship of the church. As an illustration of the views and mode of action of the church in this matter, the following is given from the records of a church meeting held February 11, 1837:

"A charge was brought before the church by Bro. E. Richmond against Sister ———, for attending a ball at ——— hall on the evening of the 10th February. As Sister ——— has been labored with by the pastor, and others of the church, and has neglected her duty to the church, and on the day of the ball

above-mentioned was talked with, and said she should go to the ball,—after a full discussion on the subject, it was moved to withdraw the hand of fellowship from her. After prayer by our pastor, the vote was taken. Voted unanimously to withdraw the hand of fellowship from her.”

From this it will be seen that the offence was committed on February 10th; that the sister had been remonstrated with previous to the offence; that she had been seen and labored with by the pastor and others after the offence, and that the fellowship of the church was withdrawn from her the next day, February 11th. This prompt, summary and unanimous action could leave doubt upon no mind as to the attitude of the church upon this point.

Again, on June 10th of the same year, we find in the records the following entry:

“A charge was brought against —— by Bro. Blackinton for attending a ball on or about the 1st of March last at South Adams. Voted a committee of two to converse with her on the subject and report at our next meeting. Com.: Bros. Blackinton and Mixer.”

Under date of June 24th is the following in reference to the same case:

“The committee to labor with Sister —— reported that they could not get that satisfaction which was desirable and that they had requested her to attend this present meeting.”

Sister —— not being present, the case was taken into consideration. After an expression by a number of the members of the church, in a christianlike manner, considering her neglect of attending when once or twice requested, voted to withdraw the hand of fellowship from her. In August following, this person, after confession of wrong, was restored to membership. In 1855 a person was withdrawn from, in the words of the records, for “unchristianlike conduct, such as card playing.”



Thus the church endeavored to keep itself unspotted from the world.

The church has ever been exceedingly careful lest it should needlessly wound the feelings of a brother. On two occasions at least the church proffered aggrieved brethren the privilege of laying their grievances before a council. At different times acts of the church were reconsidered or rescinded because it was afterwards learned that some brother or sister was aggrieved by the action. Even a vote to dissolve a meeting was recalled at a meeting held two months afterwards, because the vote to dissolve was "to the grief" of a certain brother.

The unity and harmony of the church has been carefully guarded. On December 12, 1835, a sister asked membership upon a letter of dismission from another church. The record says:

"As there was a difficulty existing between her and a member of this church her request was rejected until the difficulty was settled."

The difficulty was soon settled, the sister was received and remains a member to this day.

In cases of open, notorious crime or immorality the action of the church has usually been prompt and decisive. In such cases where the fact was established as open and notorious no committee was appointed, but the hand of fellowship at once withdrawn. That this was done in love, is evinced by the fact that in two cases committees to endeavor to restore the erring were appointed immediately after fellowship was withdrawn.

In 1811, it was voted to make it a rule to publish, "on some public day of worship, all excommunicated members, and state the reasons of their excommunication." The records give us no clue as to how long this rule was observed. It is certain



that it has never been rescinded. But the oldest member cannot recall the time when it was obeyed.

On November 11, 1837, it was:

*"Resolved, That no member of this church receive a letter of dismission until all subscriptions and dues from such individual be paid to the church."*

September 24, 1857:

"Voted that when members of this church move beyond its proper bounds, and nothing is heard from them for one year, their names be erased from the list of members.

"Voted, also, that this rule be read at each communion season of the church."

The church had no standing rules or regulations for the administration of discipline until the year 1833. Previous to that it had applied the precepts of the gospel as interpreted by the church to each particular case as it occurred. In April, 1833, Otis Blackinton and Loring Darby were a committee "to draft some articles of discipline." The committee reported methods of procedure in cases of discipline, which were adopted by the church.

On September 11, 1847, the church adopted "Rules and Regulations for the Government and Discipline of the Church." These were printed in a small pamphlet and were in force until revised and reprinted, in 1872, in the present Manual of the church.

These rules provide for a Standing Committee, which, with other duties, was made a permanent committee on discipline. Since 1847, therefore, all matters pertaining to discipline have either originated with or been referred to this committee for investigation. To the efficient services of this committee is to be ascribed much of the peace and harmony and consequent continuous prosperity of the church.

## Revivals

---

The times of refreshing that God has given to this church have been frequent and marked. The brethren believed in and prayed and worked for special outpourings of God's spirit for the reviving of his people and the conversion of sinners. The early records are brief and imperfect. Yet it is evident that seasons of ingatherings were not infrequent. Beside those that came in smaller numbers, within a year after the organization of the church nine were baptized at one time, greatly strengthening the little band. The year 1819 was a year of marked fruitfulness.

In this revival several were added that were afterwards prominent in the church; among them Nathan Putnam, Samuel Browning, Jr., Loring Darby and Edward Richmond, each of whom afterward served several years, in the order in which their names are given, as church clerk. Edward Richmond was elected to the office of deacon in 1844, and served the church faithfully in this capacity also until his death. Benjamin F. Remington, also received at this time, was afterwards licensed to preach, and then ordained pastor at Savoy, and was for many years a faithful and efficient minister of the gospel. During the pastorate of Mr. Keyes, from his ordination in November, 1828, to the spring of 1834, there was no marked revival, but a continuous and healthful growth. Up to this time the strictest simplicity of the primitive Baptists had been maintained in the church. About the time of this revival instrumental music was introduced in the Lord's Day service. Some most worthy brethren never became fully reconciled to it. They could never sound the praises of God by machinery. One excellent brother declared to the church that "music being introduced he could not travel with the church;" but he did.

And as ancient Israel praised God with the harp, the timbrel and the loud sounding cymbal, so this church learned that it could retain the instruments and praise God withal.

In the winter of 1834, during the pastorate of Mr. Palmer, there was a precious revival. This was characterized especially by the quickening of the backsliders and the restoration to the church of a member who had been excluded. In all about fifty united with the church.

The first Monday of January, 1837, was set apart by a vote of the church as a day of fasting and prayer. It was a time of spiritual dearth. But God heard the cry of His people. Within two weeks six rejoicing converts were baptized. Then others followed. Before the association met, in the following September, twenty-eight persons had united with the church. The fasting and the prayer were succeeded by gladness and joy. The religious interest continued into the next year; and on September 8, 1838, there was another special ingathering.

Early in January, 1842, during the pastorate of Mr. Alden, a protracted meeting was begun and special prayer offered and effort made for the conversion of souls. During the winter and spring about forty persons united with the church. Among those that came in by letter was Rev. J. T. Smith, from the Williamstown church. He was for many years an efficient and honored minister of the gospel.

From such a precious work as this there were some who held aloof. Instead of coming close enough to the work to see and feel that the Lord of the harvest was present and gathering in the ripened sheaves, they stood at a distance criticising and finding fault with the methods adopted. Two brothers that had been active members, and one of them for many years an officer of the church, ceased attendance and practically withdrew. They were called to account. The following is the substance of this grievance, as stated by them, and recorded in the records:

“The manner of preaching was to them a grievance, to wit, occasionally reading sermons; the manner of conducting protracted meetings was also a trial that they could not brook; expressions made use of in such times were offensive, such as cold, lifeless Christians that did not take hold of the work and lay in the way of the rolling of the wheels of salvation; together with some other things of like import.”

The next entry of the record is,

“It was voted almost unanimously that the excuses made were insufficient to render a neglect of duty justifiable.”

But there are always such men in the churches, and probably there always will be in the earthly church, who had rather sermons should not be preached at all than that they should be preached in a way they had not been accustomed to; who would prefer the wheels of salvation should not roll at all except it be in the old rut; who can accept no draught as from the Lord, no matter how refreshing it may be, unless they may drink it from the old gourd that their fathers drank from. A similar spirit had been shown in 1830. When God was blessing the preachings of Mr. Keyes to the conversion of souls an excellent brother, who, in his letter, bears witness could not himself write correct English, criticised the preaching and expressed his grievance.

It is gratifying to know that all these aggrieved brethren were fully persuaded that the better way was to bear their grievance patiently and continue in fellowship.

The church believed emphatically that God's people should work for the saving of souls; but it believed equally emphatically that salvation is God's work. This was forcibly expressed in the letter to the association for that year written by the clerk, Deacon Richmond.

The next year, 1843, a still more remarkable work of grace was enjoyed. This was by far the most fruitful year the

church had yet enjoyed. About the end of April Rev. Isaac Westcott began a protracted meeting and preached daily for four weeks. In one month from the 28th of April to the 28th of May sixty-four persons were baptized; seventy-six in all before the year closed. The town had never before been so moved. The church records speak of "signal blessings by the Holy Spirit, fostering conviction on the minds and hearts of the people, and bringing many to the knowledge of the truth."

Of those that were baptized at this time, the following are yet (October, 1878), members of the church: Sanford Blackinton, Mrs. Eliza Blackinton, Mrs. Juline Mitchell, Mrs. Maria Flood, Royal B. Whitney, Mrs. Elvira Battis, Mrs. Louisa Veazie, Mrs. Angelia Rand, Salmon Burlingame, Mrs. Harriet A. Tyler, Mrs. Lucinda Dean, William Ingraham, Mrs. Elizabeth Bliss, Mrs. Eliza Leary, Mrs. Abigail Witherell, Ezra Whitaker and Luretta Holden. Of the seventy-six baptized these only remain. Among those who have gone to their reward were: Dr. Thomas A. Brayton, a prominent citizen and for many years an active member of the church; Samuel Ingalls, who was elected to the office of deacon in 1844, and to that of clerk in 1846, and served the church with rare fidelity in both capacities until his death in 1864. He impressed his character, his deep piety, consecrated energy and businesslike accuracy, upon the record books of the church as no man before him had done. As they came from his hands as church clerk the records are not bare statements of votes that were passed. He enlarged and unfolded, he gave the acts done and also the reason and the result. One breathes the surrounding atmosphere. The very life and genius of the church appear on his pages. His records are a contemporaneous history rather than ordinary minutes. This fact has appeared in citations already made.



From this time the church appears to have taken on a new life and new power. It assumed a new place before the community. It became an aggressive body, to a degree it had never been before. The men that came in at this time, as the years passed on, proved to be in many a trial the bone and sinew, the life and power of the church.

Nevertheless a period followed during which there were but few accessions. Only seventeen were baptized during the next six years, an average of less than three a year. In 1845, two years after the revival, the clerk makes this entry in the records: "But few members present. The state of religion is manifestly low." That there was no laxity of doctrine, or cessation of desire, is apparent from the letter to the association for 1845. It is especially noteworthy that the church makes request to the Association for the appointment of a general day of fasting and prayer. While the church was most zealous in works, the fathers profoundly apprehended that fundamental truth which underlies all Christian effort, that all human working is utterly vain except God's quickening Spirit be present, and that that Spirit is promised in answer to humble believing prayer.

In 1849 there was not a single baptism. It was during this time on the 20th of September, 1848, that Otis Blackinton was called to his reward, at the age of seventy-six. He was in the full maturity of his manhood, thirty-six years of age, when the church was constituted, forty years before. He was at that time a member of the church at Stamford, Vt. It was he that sought out and gathered together the brethren, that arranged for the calling of the council of recognition, that organized the movement for the constituting of the church. His name heads the list of those that presented their letters. He was the first moderator. It was not customary for the pastor to preside in business meetings until after Mr. Keyes became pastor. In



1829 it was "voted that Brother Keyes serve as moderator in all our meetings when present." Up to that time, for about twenty years, Deacon Blackinton had been almost continuously "Permanent Moderator." He was the first deacon of the church and held the office until his death, although at his own request he was relieved of some of the duties seven years before. It may be truly said that the North Adams Church could not, as appears to our human understanding, have been what it was, or have done the work it did, but for Deacon Otis Blackinton. He led inquirers to the cross; he watched over the discipline of the church, he went after the erring and sought to restore them, he was the pastor's right hand for every good word and work. Wise in counsel, prompt, discreet and patient in action, and withal of deep and earnest piety, he was for the Lord's work in the sphere in which the Lord put him, a great and a good man. Blessed is the church that has for forty years an Otis Blackinton in its membership.

God leads his people in strange ways. The church had been greatly strengthened and was doubtless somewhat lifted up in its own esteem. The Master left them to walk in the desert and under the cloud for a time, that they might not forget where their strength lay. Of the covenant meeting held Saturday, December 8, 1849, it is said:

"The brethren and sisters present generally expressed a low state of religious enjoyment, many apparently mourning over their coldness and backwardness in the cause of Christ. In view of our past and present condition as a church, it was thought best by some of the brethren to recommend to the church the propriety of setting apart a day to be observed as a day of humiliation, fasting and prayer. After hearing the minds of several of the brethren on the subject, the sense of the meeting, both brethren and sisters was taken, as to setting apart Thursday and Thursday evening next for the above pur-

pose. The vote resulted nearly unanimously in the affirmative."

After the celebration of the Lord's Supper the next day, the matter was brought up again in order that an expression might be had from those not present the day before. A vote was again taken. It was unanimous for the observance of the day. A great blessing followed. The entries in the records, as the names are given of those who came forward from time to time professing their faith, overflow with expressions of joy and gratitude.

The church was not yet satisfied. The blessing received only awakened longings for more. The following Thursday was again observed as a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer. For six hours, without intermission, the church remained together in prayer.

At the next covenant meeting so deep was the feeling and so many were present and wished to participate that the meeting was continued through the entire afternoon, then took a recess and reassembled, and continued through the evening.

During this revival one hundred and twenty-six were baptized, eighteen received by letter and five restored; making a total ingathering of 149. Among those then brought in were the following, who are still (October, 1878), members of the church: Valmore A. Whitaker, who with great efficiency has served as church clerk; Stephen Fairfield, Harlan L. Phillips, Duty S. Miller, Henry S. Millard, Allen B. Darling, Albert Witherell, Edward J. Witherell, Robert G. Hale, Arnold G. Potter, Charles Crosier, Samuel Keyes, for many years a deacon and a worker in the Lord's harvest field of rare devotion and efficiency, and others who are now workers elsewhere; and Dr. Edward Norman, Dr. Henry P. Phillips, Deacon P. H. Nichols, Alban S. Nelson and others who have gone to their reward, beside very many Godly women. Of these some were

immersed in the baptistry which some time before had been put in the church, and some in the flowing stream under the open sky; each individual being allowed free choice as to the place in which should occur the act of obedience, of consecration and of burial into the likeness of the Saviour's death.

This was a protracted meeting—a revival effort—of which many speak depreciatingly. It was specially sought in prayer and humiliation, when the church was in a cold and low state. Rev. Harvey Fittz was called in to preach daily before any peculiar interest was developed, in the hope that with God's blessing an interest might thus be developed. After the work fairly began Rev. Dwight Ives was called upon for still further assistance in arousing the people and calling upon them to turn to God. The result was what every man of faith ought, under such circumstances, to anticipate. God ever blesses the humble, faithful, persistent efforts of his people. Would that the churches would oftener apprehend the spiritual desolation of Zion, take to themselves God's promises, and go earnestly to work looking for and expecting a blessing.

During the next six years there were but sixteen additions by baptism, but in 1857 another blessed revival occurred.

A review of the work is given in glowing terms in the annual letter of the church to the association written by the pastor, Rev. Miles Sanford. Among those baptized at this time were those who have since been both leaders and burden-bearers in the church; those who have proved by more than twenty years of faithful, self-sacrificing service, the sincerity of their consecration. Among the first twenty-four baptized on March 22, 1857, are the names of Calvin T. Sampson and George M. Darby, deacons, Edward S. Wilkinson, treasurer, Oliver Arnold, afterward elected to the office of Deacon, but declined to serve, William Henry Whitman, Dr. A. Harvey, George Welton, O. A. Archer, Charles D. Sanford, son of the pastor, who

fell in battle in defense of his country in 1864, and many others, pillars in the church. While some were coming others were going. Loring Darby, formerly clerk, and Deacon Duty S. Tyler, for several years superintendent of the Sunday school, passed that year from earthly labor.

The good work continued uninterrupted through the next year. It extended also to the adjacent village of Blackinton with an ingathering there.

It is exceedingly interesting to note how seasons of depression followed these awakenings. There are valleys as well as mountain tops, winters as well as summers. In the economy of Nature one is as needful as the other. May it not be so in the kingdom of grace as well? that the hardening, solidifying, strengthening cold and dearth of winter may be as needful as the glowing, fruit-bearing gladsome heat of summer? While the progress of the church through the year, on the whole, was steadily forward as we who now looking back upon it can see, those that were in the strife and conflict were not always able to see it. The following year, 1859, there was not a single baptism.

In 1860 but one baptism was reported, and the letter to the association is a lamentation. But the tide turned. The church that had such convictions and such longings could not be satisfied without work also. Early in the spring of 1861 Rev. Mr. Robinson, of Sand Lake, came to assist the pastor in another special effort. Prayer meetings were held from house to house, and the church was girding itself for the conflict. Another gracious revival followed.

On April 26, 1861, after recording the reception of converts, the clerk, Deacon Ingalls, adds:

"So the work of the Lord progresses among us, as we believe, in answer to prayer. Thanks be to God for all these blessings."

In the annual letter to the association, dated October 7, 1862, written by Deacon Ingalls, mention is made of the revival in words of gratitude, thanksgiving and praise.

In this revival, Deacon J. M. Canedy, Henry W. Kingsley, Augustus M. Heminway and about forty others were baptized.

This also was a revival worked for, not waited for. God blessed prayerful efforts. It will be seen by the date that this was in the tumult and distraction of the first year of the Civil War. On the Sunday after the letter to the association was read, the pastor, Miles Sanford, asked and obtained leave of absence that he might enter the service of his country as chaplain in the 27th Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers. The country was in a ferment. War cries and noise of arms were heard on every side. But in the praying church in the valley of the Berkshire Hills there was grace and great joy; for mercy drops, precious, abounding, and blessed, were gently falling.

In the years immediately following, during the distraction of the Civil War there was no increase. For two years there was not a baptism. In the third year after there were but two, and the fourth year but four. During this period some of the standard-bearers passed to their reward. Samuel Ingalls, the faithful deacon and efficient church clerk, completed his earthly work. The annual letter to the association for the year 1864, lovingly lays a wreath upon the graves of still others that fell with their armor on. The next year, 1865, Samuel Browning passed away. For years he had been a faithful, unwavering, self-sacrificing disciple of Christ. During eight of these years he had served as clerk of the church.

But the people of God were again beginning to see and to deplore their inactivity. Humble confession, deep convictions and earnest longings are expressed in the letter to the association in October, 1865. The state of mind and frame of heart



here expressed was preparatory to a blessing. The soil was preparing, the seed was sowing; the waterings of divine grace were soon to come and the fruitful season to follow. The ingathering was large. The letter to the association in 1866 was a gladsome expression of joy and thanksgiving.

During the next year only two were baptized. The next year eight, and the next two years, 1869, 1870, not any. Meantime the old pillars were passing away, but others were taking their places.

On March 19, 1871, Rev. Miles Sanford, D. D., resigned the pastorate, after almost eighteen years of faithful, efficient service. He was succeeded by Rev. Courtland W. Anable, D. D. An increasing religious interest was soon manifest. During his first year sixteen were baptized, in the next year, 1873, twenty-one. The financial panic that overwhelmed the country with universal disaster occurred this year. In many parts of the country it awakened reflection. It turned thought and energy from temporal to eternal things. God over-ruled it to the salvation of many. To a wonderful degree this was true in North Adams. In the winter of 1873-74 there was a spiritual awakening in all the churches and a turning to God, such as the town as a whole had never before known. The churches of all the denominations were revived and strengthened.

Such seasons of refreshing, such large accessions of many of the strongest men of the town, such continuous growth in numbers and in influence in the commonwealth and in the denomination, could not have been possible in a divided church. Those issues that divided and even broke up many churches in the years we have been reviewing—freemasonry, millenarianism, slavery, and temperance—never disturbed the peace and harmony at North Adams. The great State of New York elected William H. Seward Governor, on the anti-masonic



issue. Over this issue many churches, especially in New York and New England, were rent and ruined. Miller, the leader of the Millerites, deluded tens of thousands with his sophistries, regarding the immediate coming of Christ, and churches abandoned their faith and turned Millerites in a day. Slavery, also, had long been eating at the vitals of the nation and working its way to a civil war. Churches were rent on the slavery question. Then came the war issue, and churches were divided or distracted on that. At another time elections were turning on the temperance question, the cry everywhere was license or prohibition, to the alienation of many.

Amid all these and other issues, engendering animosities, rupturing the most sacred ties, dividing churches, communities, and even families, the North Adams Church moved steadily on, always united and harmonious. And this, not because of lack of conviction, or the unequivocal expression of those convictions.

To Free Masonry, either in its then political, social or moral relations, there is no reference in any of the church records.

On the slavery issue the church was always positively anti-slavery. On November 7, 1850, Dr. H. P. Phillips, Deacon P. H. Nichols and W. H. King were appointed a committee of the church to solicit funds to buy and give freedom to a colored minister of the gospel, then a slave. At the church meeting next after their appointment, the committee was called upon for a report. They reported little progress. The church voted that the committee be continued, and that, in the words of the resolution adopted, "they raise funds for the purpose without delay." This was anti-slavery sentiment that was not all sentiment. Convictions were followed by deeds. The church also unanimously gave its pastor leave of absence to serve as chaplain in the war that slavery had caused.

In its letter to the Association in 1867 the church sounds out a ringing, clarion note on the prohibition question that was then dividing the State.

Although sometimes deploring its low spiritual state, the religious sentiment and spiritual life of the church has been uniformly upon too high a level to be distracted or diverted by political, social or economic issues. It has never forgotten that it is the household of God associated and affiliated together to hold forth the word of life, to win men to God, and to build them up in the most holy faith.

## Pastors

---

The records of the early pastorates are extremely brief and unsatisfactory. In the early years of the church the pastors entered upon their work without a formal call. The brethren consulted together in an informal manner as to a suitable person to serve the church in the pastoral office; they then passed through the community with a subscription paper, pledging payments for the support of the person named as pastor. If a sufficient amount were subscribed, the person named entered upon his work without further formality. As the year drew to a close the subscription paper was again circulated, and if a sufficient sum was pledged, the pastor continued another year. If for any reason a sufficient amount was not forthcoming, the pastor sought another field of labor. Thus for several years pastors came and went, and no vote was taken by the church with reference to their coming and going, and hence no record thereof was made in the minutes. There was not much growth under such a system. It was not until the pastoral relation came to be more highly esteemed, not until the pastor came to be something more than a hired man, coming and going as a subscription paper might vary, that substantial growth occurred. Nevertheless, one of the chief elements of success in the church for the past fifty years has been the high estimate the church placed upon the pastoral relation; and the earnest support it gave its successive pastors. Previous to the organization of the church, as already seen, Elder Dyer Stark, pastor from 1802 to 1804 at Williamstown, and after that at Stamford, preached half of the time at North Adams for two years. After that Elder Calvin Keyes, pastor at Conway, and others, preached here more or less regularly until the organization of the church. Although there was yet no church organization,



THE PARSONAGE.



these brethren did all the work of pastor, and received compensation for their services.

ELDER GEORGE WITHERELL,

*Pastor from December 1, 1808, to December 1, 1813.*

We have been able to learn nothing whatever of the first pastor of the church previous to his assuming the pastorate. The Church Manual, published in 1872, states that he became pastor December 1, 1808. This cannot be far out of the way; but no such exact date can be fixed from the records. The church was constituted October 30, 1808. The letters of dismission of the constituent members from the churches from which they came were not presented to the organized body until January 7, 1809. At a meeting of the church, held April 23, 1809, the name of Elder George Witherell first appears when he and the deacons were authorized to write to the church at Coventry certifying to the Christian character and walk of Martin Salisbury, and to ask for him a letter of dismission. From this it appears that Elder Witherell was then serving as pastor. On the 13th of May he was received as a member of the church on a letter from the church at Heath, Massachusetts. That his services as pastor began not far from the beginning of the year 1809 is evident from the fact that on January 31st, the day Deacon Otis Blackinton was ordained, the church "met according to appointment for the purpose of trying the minds of the brethren respecting continuing Elder Witherell another year. \* \* \* Voted to continue Elder Witherell, if possible."

The Manual above referred to states that his pastorate closed December 1, 1813. This also is more exact than the records. At a meeting, held December 17, 1812, he was chosen moderator, and appears to have been pastor. At this point there is a hiatus in the records. No entry whatever was made from that



date until January 12, 1814, when Elder Calvin Keyes, of Conway, was moderator, and the pastorate of Elder Witherell had evidently closed. As there is nothing in the records in direct conflict with the dates given in the Manual of 1872, and as those dates may have been determined upon information not now accessible, we allow them to stand,—that Elder Witherell became pastor December 1, 1808, one month after the constitution of the church, and closed his pastorate December 1, 1813, having served exactly five years. It was while he was pastor that the church was admitted into the Shaftsbury Association, at its annual meeting at Schodac, N. Y., June 7, 1809. The church then numbered forty-one members.

The minutes of the association show that during his pastorate Elder Witherell baptized twenty-one persons into the fellowship of the church, besides others that he baptized elsewhere. His labors were not confined to his home field. In 1810 he was appointed by the Shaftsbury Association to preach in Albany, N. Y., when it is stated: "The Baptist brethren have not acquired strength enough to arise and build them a house of worship, nor even sustain a regular minister, and hence the association appointed them supplies." The next year, 1811, the executive committee of the association report that they "had employed Elders George Witherell and Daniel Haskell to travel and preach in Western New York and Upper Canada for three months each," and that they had performed the service. Their labors are commended in the highest terms. They laid the foundations in what was then almost a wilderness, where many of the churches they founded or encouraged have since come to be among the most influential churches of the land. Thus from the very first North Adams was occupying the waste places, and stretching out to those that were beyond.

After leaving North Adams Elder Witherell was pastor several years at Coleraine, where his ministry was greatly blessed.

In 1820 he became pastor at Hoosick. In 1823 he became pastor at Hartford, N. Y., where he remained until 1834. After that he labored for a time in Indiana, and then as pastor of the Cussewago church in Western Pennsylvania. Here, after a most fruitful ministry, he died, August 19, 1839, at the age of fifty-five years. He must, therefore, have been but twenty-four years of age when he became pastor at North Adams. A biographical notice in Wright's History of Shaftsbury Association says: "He was an excellent preacher, sound in the faith, wise in council among his brethren." But to him, as to others of the Master's servants, trials evidently came.

It is easy to read between the lines of the records and see that even this first pastorate was closed under a cloud. A case of discipline had been for a long time pending. It occupied several meetings and had called forth from the church a severe "letter of admonition." At the meeting of December 17, 1812, the last at which Elder Witherell's name appears as pastor, we find the following entry:

"First. Chose Elder Witherell moderator.

"Second. Proceeded to business of reading over the charges to Sister ———, in her letter of admonition.

"Third. Took up the above charges against Sister ———, "and labored upon the same, and voted satisfied."

In the records following the last sentence there have been inserted, in a different handwriting and with different ink, the following words: "But found Elder Witherell a liar." Then the word "liar" has been scratched over with a pen and the word "teller" written in. The aggressive work of the church appears to have stopped abruptly just there. There is no further entry in the records until January 12, 1814, a period of over two years. The next year the church sent neither messengers nor a letter to the association, and for nearly three years the church was without a pastor. During the eight years

that followed this unfortunate bitterness the church had two pastors, neither of whom remained a full year; and during the seven years next following only sixteen persons were baptized. It is very evident that the church was not walking together in brotherly love.

August 2, 1823, eleven years afterward, the church "Voted to take up an error about Elder Witherell, which we find in our records, at our next meeting." At the next meeting, September 6, 1823, the church

"Voted: We concieve the accusation contained in the ninth line, thirty-second page, against Elder Witherell, to have been inserted by some designing person and not by authority of the church; and we believe it to be an error."

Thus reparation, so far as possible, was finally made. But the good elder had long been gone, and was successfully prosecuting his work elsewhere.

ELIJAH F. WILLEY,

*Pastor from December 1, 1815, to April 1, 1817.*

The dates for the pastorate of Elder Willey, like those of the first pastorate, are given from the Manual of 1872, and not from the records. His name nowhere appears in the records of this date. In the minutes of the session of the Shaftsbury Association, held at Sandisfield in June, 1816, Elder Willey is named as pastor at North Adams. In a very brief historical sketch of the church, sent to the association in the annual letter of 1831, we read: "In the fall of 1815 Elder Elijah F. Willey became pastor of the church, and continued his labors as such until the spring of 1817." At the session of the association, 1817, he appears as pastor at Lansingburg, N. Y. He was subsequently pastor of churches in Central New York, where he died not many years afterward. That he was a man of recognized character and influence is evident from the very promi-

ment position that he took in the association. He was in the association but four years. Two of those years he was clerk; one year he preached the opening sermon; for three years he was standing secretary of correspondence; twice wrote the circular letter, and once the corresponding letter of the association. Of the fruits of his pastorate in North Adams we only know that the minutes of the association report three baptized during the year in which his name appears. One of those baptized by him was Francis Wayland, afterward president of Brown University.

HOSEA WHEELER,

*Served the Church as a Licentiate from the Fall of 1817 to Summer of 1818.*

Hosea Wheeler was born at Dunbarton, N. H., March 8, 1791. His advantages in an interior town were small, but he made such progress in learning that in 1807 he entered Dartmouth College and attained there very respectable rank as a scholar. He studied theology in an institution then known as the Maine Charity School, and afterward at Bangor Theological Seminary. He was at that time a Congregationalist, and was studying for the Congregational ministry. He married a daughter of Professor Abijah Wines, of the Bangor Seminary, and had every possible prospect of advancement and great usefulness. He became convinced that he had not been scripturally baptized. He applied for baptism and membership to the Baptist church at Salisbury, N. H., and October 25, 1817, he was baptized by Rev. Otis Robinson. The church at once gave him a license to preach. He very soon received an invitation to preach for the North Adams church. He came, and here, within a month of his baptism, he began his work as a Baptist minister. He was here but a few months when the church at Newburyport called him to become its pastor. He accepted the

call and on December 9, 1818, was there ordained. He remained there until 1822, when he became pastor at Eastport, Maine, where he died January 27, 1823. He wrote and published a treatise in defense of Gospel Baptism. A son of his, born in North Adams, is Rev. Francis B. Wheeler, D. D., for twenty-four years pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Poughkeepsie, N. Y. A daughter, born after Mr. Wheeler left North Adams, is the wife of Rev. Samuel Baker, D. D., of Russellville, Ky.

Mr. Wheeler, not being ordained, baptized none into the North Adams church. But if we may judge by that which followed, he must have left a most salutary influence behind him. For two years after he left the church was without a pastor; but those two years were the most fruitful the church enjoyed during the first thirty years of its history. Wright, (*History of Shaftsbury Association*, p. 161) says, with reference to the reports for the year 1820:

"The church at North Adams had received in the course of two years about seventy by baptism, which enlarged them more than any previous work of grace that they had enjoyed, raising their number to 125. Although destitute of an under shepherd, the Great Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep was mindful of them in their destitution, and led them into green pastures and made them feed beside the still waters."

Of this revival Elder John Leland says, in his autobiography:

"In March, 1819, work began in the north part of Adams, which progressed several months. The people in that place had no settled minister, but were visited by ministers who lived around them. Of the seventy who united with the church I baptized twenty-seven."

GEORGE ROBINSON,

*Supply.*

The Manual of 1872 names George Robinson as succeeding Mr. Wheeler, and as serving from the fall of 1819 to spring of



1820. This is manifestly an error. Not only do the records of the church make no mention of him as pastor, but the official minutes of the association show the church to have been without a pastor. The association met with the North Adams church in June, 1820. The church is not only reported as having been without a pastor for the year, but is spoken of as having enjoyed a blessed revival with no under shepherd to lead them. Elder Robinson was pastor at Pownal, Vt., and preached the annual sermon before the association. Wright in his history, and Leland in his autobiography, both state that the church had no pastor during those two years. Leland, as we have seen, not only says: "The people had no settled minister during those two revival years," but adds that "they were visited by ministers who lived around them."

Elder Nathaniel Otis, pastor of the Second Canaan church, Elder Ira Hall, pastor of the First Canaan church, and Elder Calvin Keyes, pastor at Conway, baptized at North Adams and gave the hand of fellowship in behalf of the church during this revival. But it does not appear that Elder Robinson baptized any.

Joel Fosket, still living at the age of eighty-four in Essex, Iowa, came to North Adams in 1818, while Wheeler was preaching as a licentiate. He was converted in the revival the following year and baptized June 13, 1819. In a letter, dated June 21, 1880, he says that he distinctly remembers an Elder Robinson, who preached occasionally for the church after Wheeler left, but thinks he was never pastor of the church. The error evidently arose from a misunderstanding of a sentence in the historical sketch in the letter to the association in 1831. That letter says: "This fall (1819) Elder George Robinson came and preached with the church until the next spring." This has been taken to mean that Mr. Robinson was pastor. Interpreted, however, by the statement of Wright and of Leland,



that the church during that year and the next had no pastor, and the statement of Leland, that neighboring ministers supplied the church, and the fact that Robinson was at this time pastor at Pownal, it can only mean that he preached for the church as temporary supply in addition to the work at his own proper field at Pownal. For these reasons we drop the name of George Robinson from the list of pastors.

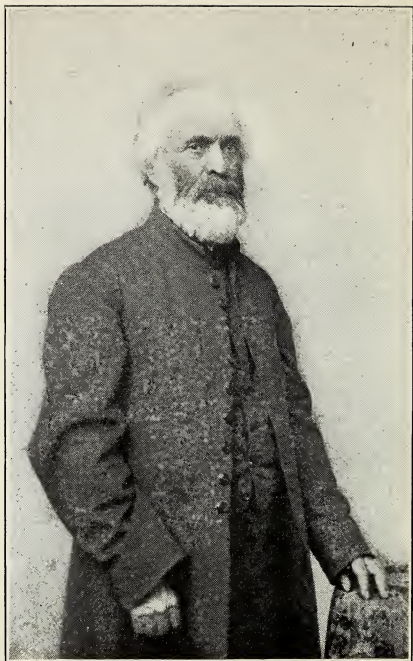
SAMUEL SAVORY,

*Pastor from January 5, 1821, to February 3, 1826.*

Samuel Savory came to North Adams from the church formerly known as the Hadley Baptist church, afterward known as the Corinth church. He became a member of the North Adams church by letter from the Hadley church on January 5, 1821. For two years previous he had been reported by that church as a licentiate. He came, therefore, as a licensed preacher, but whether upon invitation of the church in order to become pastor does not appear. From the fact that the church renewed and confirmed his license the next month after he was received, and on June 2 voted "To call Samuel Savory to the ministry," it may be inferred that he acted as pastor from the time that he came, and that he came for that purpose. He was ordained as pastor of the church in July, 1821. There is no account of the ordination in the records. The fact of the ordination is, however, subsequently referred to.

His pastorate continued without any incident of special note until February 3, 1826, when a Letter of Dismission was granted to him. The historical sketch before referred to says, "Many things of an unpleasant nature transpired in the time of the last mentioned person. The effects of some of these things are yet in existence." What those things were can only be inferred from the cases of discipline constantly disturbing the





REV. C. B. KEYES.

peace of the church, by reason of the defection of some of those brought in during the preceding revival.

There is nowhere an intimation that the pastor's labors were not faithful, efficient and acceptable. In such a state of unrest, however, there could be no great ingathering. There were but seventeen persons baptized during the five years of this pastorate. Upon leaving North Adams Mr. Savory became pastor of the Fourth Church of Shaftsbury, Vermont.

CHARLES B. KEYES,

*Pastor from July 1, 1827, to April 1, 1834.*

In the minutes of the Shaftsbury Association for 1827, Charles B. Keyes appears as a licentiate of the Baptist Church of Bennington, Vt. In the summer of that year he began to serve the church at North Adams as a temporary supply. On the 18th of August, at a special meeting of the church, he was requested to preach for the church one year, the engagement to date back from the first of the preceding July. The invitation was accepted and he continued to preach for the church. On February 28, 1828, he became a member of the church upon a Letter of Dismission from the church at Bennington. On October 3 of the same year he closed his relation as pastor, and asked for a letter of dismission, and on November 7 a committee was appointed to procure a pastor. On November 18 the church requested Mr. Keyes to resume the pastoral relation for one year and to receive ordination. A committee was appointed to confer with him. The committee withdrew and afterward returned and reported at the same meeting that he acceded to the wish of the church. The Letter of Dismission from the church which he had received was returned and he was again received as a member of the church. It was then

“Voted: That we send to the following churches to sit with us in council to examine the Christian experience and qualifications

of Brother Keyes, and to assist in setting him apart by ordination as a minister of the New Testament, if it shall be thought advisable, viz.: The First and Second Churches in Shaftsbury, the church in Bennington, Vt., the church in Hoosick, N. Y., the church in Savoy, the First and Second Churches in Cheshire, the church in Williamstown, the Second Church in Adams and the church in Florida, Mass.; and also that we send to Elder B. T. Welch, of Albany, Elder Z. Howard, of Troy, Elder E. D. Hubbell, of Clifton Park, N. Y., and A. Beach, of Pittsfield, Mass."

The council was requested to meet November 27, 1828. Brethren Blackinton, Putnam, Mixer, Cumming, Brown, Browning, Richmond and Whitman were appointed to represent the church in the council. The council met in accordance with the call. In the minutes a full account is given of the proceedings at the ordination, the second ordination of a pastor in the history of the church.

From the organization of the church it had been customary for a layman to preside at all business meetings. Soon after the ordination of Mr. Keyes it was ordered by vote that the pastor serve as Moderator at all meetings when present. From that time to the present the pastor, for the time being, has been deemed Moderator, *ex-officio*.

On October 30, 1831, Mr. Keyes was granted a Letter of Dismission. He, however, either did not receive the letter or returned it, and continued as pastor without intermission for another year. October 28, 1832, he again asked and was granted a Letter of Dismission. But he still continued his pastorate, and on May 25, 1833, returned this letter to the church.

There is no entry in the records which fixes the exact time at which his pastorate finally closed. There is an entry under date of March 8, 1834, that alludes to him as pastor. An entry on April 12, 1834, names A. H. Palmer as pastor. It is evi-

dent therefrom that his pastorate closed on or about April 1, 1834. On June 1, 1834, he was dismissed to the church at Lansingburg, N. Y., of which church he had assumed the pastorate. During the term of his pastorate here he baptized forty persons.

From the fact that Mr. Keyes asked for and received a Letter of Dismission four times during a pastorate of six years and seven months most unfavorable impressions might be drawn. In fact, the unsettled and unstable tenure of office of the pastor resulted from the pernicious usage which then obtained of making engagements with the pastor for but one year. If for any reason, the neglect or oversight of the church, or the intentional obstruction of even one or two persons, the call was not renewed at the expiration of the year, a conscientious pastor had no alternative but to consider his engagement closed, and his office as pastor vacated. Under such circumstances he could but ask for his formal dismission that he might seek service elsewhere. The church would thereupon awaken to its neglect or its folly, and renew the call for another year.

It is no wonder that under such a system many churches in New England became disrupted and greatly weakened or actually extinct. A church that sets its pastor up every year to be openly opposed by all who have itching ears, by all whom he has reproved and rebuked for sin, or if he be a peculiarly devout and godly man, by all who may be worldly-minded in the church, cannot possibly for any long time do an aggressive work for the Master. If such a church remains in harmony that results from the dominating of some one or more persons whose wishes have to be recognized as supreme in the church, or it is the harmony that results from spiritual stagnation.

From the time Mr. Keyes assumed the pastorate, July 1, 1827, to the close of his service, April 1, 1834, seventy-three persons united with the church. Thirty-nine of these were



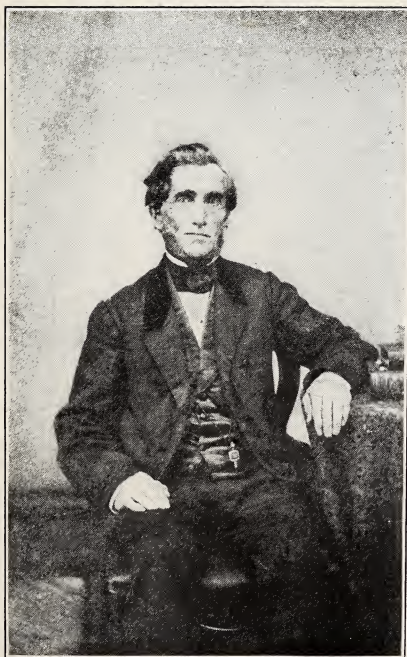
baptized; twenty-seven united by letter from other churches. The records are imperfect with regard to seven, not showing whether they became members by baptism or from other churches.

While not a large number was baptized during these seven years, it is evident that a vigorous Christian activity was maintained by the church. The pastor by instruction of the church drew up a series of resolutions in regard to increased consecration and activity in missionary operations, and a monthly missionary concert for prayer was appointed. The church was also led to organize itself into a Bible Society, auxiliary to the American and Foreign Bible Society, liberal contributions were made to the Burmese Mission, especially for printing Judson's translation of the Burmese Bible, and for the Massachusetts Baptist State Convention. Appropriations of money were made from the church treasury for the support of the Sunday school. Strenuous efforts were made to introduce suitable reading into families, and on one occasion after a canvass it was reported to the church that nine different religious periodicals were taken. Great care was taken to maintain integrity of character and godliness of life among the members. To this end an elaborate paper with reference to the better administration of discipline was drawn up by a committee, of which Deacon Blackinton was chairman, and adopted by the church. Thus while the numbers were not greatly enlarged, the church made substantial progress in various lines of Christian life and activity.

THOMAS S. ROGERS,

*Pastor from April, 1838, to April, 1840.*

Mr. Rogers was born in Greenwich, N. Y., March 9, 1810. His early life was upon a farm, with the advantages of a district school. From the age of nineteen he taught in the public



REV. THOS. S. ROGERS.



schools for five years. At the age of twenty-one he was converted and baptized into the fellowship of the Bottskill Baptist church at Greenwich, N. Y. He at once began to hold religious meetings in private houses and in school houses where he was teaching, and to unfold the scriptures and preach the gospel.

The church of which he was a member, knowing of his activity, unasked, and without his knowledge of the proposed action, voted, and sent to him, a license to preach. He then entered the Bennington Academy, and entered upon a course of study for the Christian ministry. After leaving the Academy, he studied theology two years under the private instruction of pastors; first under Dr. Nathaniel Culver, pastor at Greenwich, and then under Rev. William Arthur, father of President Arthur, and then under Dr. Isaac Wescott, pastor at Stillwater.

In 1837 he was called to the pastorate at Pownal, Vt., and was there ordained. After a few months there he was called to the pastorate of the North Adams church, which he entered upon on April 1, 1838. His ministry in North Adams was for two years. He subsequently served as pastor at West Troy, N. Y., Lansingburg, N. Y., Pawtucket, R. I., Harlem, N. Y., Newtown, Ohio, Schuylerville, N. Y., Elizabeth, N. J., Clifton Park, N. Y., Hoosick, N. Y., and West Greenwich, N. Y. He served as a pastor for fifty years, in six States. And in all those fifty years there was not a week when he was not pastor of a church.

He was a good man and full of the Holy Ghost; and though his pastorates were not lengthy, they were everywhere blessed to the strengthening of the churches and the upbuilding of the kingdom.

MILES SANFORD, D. D.,

*Pastor from July, 1853, to March, 1871.*

The following is his letter of acceptance of the pastorate. The spirit that breathes in this letter, manifested in the daily, godly life, and in the devoted self-sacrificing service, was the spirit that gave him the longest pastorate in the history of the church, and the most fruitful ministry:

GLOUCESTER, Mass., April 12, 1853.

To the First Baptist Church, North Adams, Mass.

Dear Brethren: Your call voted to me to become your pastor in church meeting July 7, 1853, and communicated to me by Deacon S. Ingalls, your clerk, was received on yesterday.

In answer to the letter of your clerk permit me to say, that I accept the call that you have tendered me and on the conditions named therein. And in thus formally accepting it I can declare of a truth that I do it with much trembling and fear. The assumption in any place and at any time of the heavy responsibilities of the Christian pastor is a matter of the greatest moment. The office of an ambassador of Christ requires the exhibition of truths whose acceptance shall make men happy eternally, and whose rejection shall make them miserable forever. Hence it involves obligations, and imposes duties, compared with which those of the mere earthly ambassadors are as nothing. It was this view which in its survey took in two worlds and comprehended the bearing the gospel dispensation was to have upon the blessedness or the woe of man forever—it was such a view that led Paul to exclaim, “and who is sufficient for these things?” Ah, who indeed, is worthy of employment in such a work as this? And who has the ability for the discharge of its duties? Certain it is, that no unsanctified man possesses either. Indeed, the man of sanctified soul feels that he is shut up to this single and absorbing conclusion—“our sufficiency is of God.”

This view which may well cause trembling and fear to the minister of the Gospel has urged itself upon my attention with a power which has taken hold upon my whole soul. To me it is clear, and to you it must be equally so, that my success as







REV. JOHN ALDEN.

your pastor, and your success as a church, in carrying forward the interests of the cause of Christ, will depend entirely upon our practical recognition of the sovereignty of God's power in the conversion of men to the truth as it is in Jesus, and in the upbuilding of His people in the belief and practice of this truth. Paul may plant, Apollos may water; but all will be vain unless God shall give the increase.

Praying and hoping that the relation now formed may be promotive of great good to the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ, and mutually profitable and pleasant to both pastor and people, I remain,

Your servant in the Gospel,

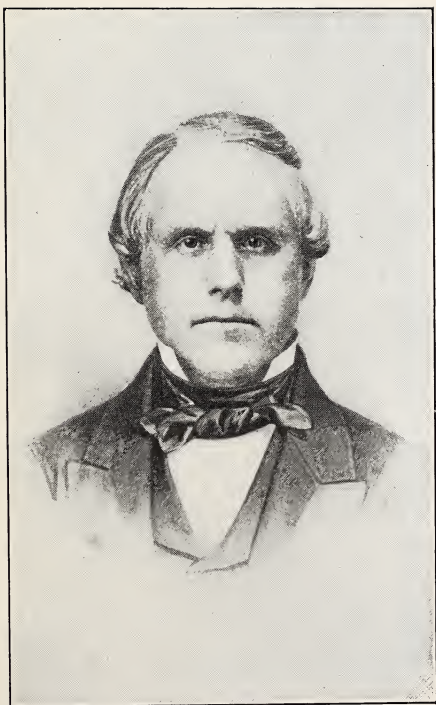
MILES SANFORD.

P. S.—I shall, divine Providence permitting, be at North Adams next week so as to commence my labors on Lord's Day, the 24th inst.

The North Adams church has had fourteen pastors, in the following order: George Witherell, Elisha F. Willey, Hosea Wheeler, George Robinson, Samuel Savory, George B. Keyes, Asa H. Palmer, Lemuel Covell, Thomas S. Rogers, John Alden, Horace T. Love, Miles Sanford, Courtland W. Anable, A. C. Osborn. In the seventy years of its history the church has been but a very small portion of the time without a pastor. Without counting these brief intervals the average time of the fourteen pastorates has been exactly five years. The briefest pastorates were those of Horace Wheeler, one year, and George Robinson, one-half year; the longest that of Miles Sanford, eighteen years.

George Witherell served the church five years and baptized twenty-one persons; Elisha F. Willey served a year and a half and baptized four; Hosea Wheeler, one year and baptized one; George Robinson, about one-half year and baptized thirty-two; Samuel Savory, five years and baptized fourteen; Charles B. Keyes, seven years and baptized forty; Asa H. Palmer, two

years and baptized forty-three; Lemuel Covel, two years and baptized thirteen; Thomas S. Rogers, two years and baptized twenty; John Alden, six years and baptized one hundred and seventeen; Horace T. Love, six years and baptized one hundred and forty-four; Miles Sanford, eighteen years and baptized two hundred and seventy; A. C. Osborn, present incumbent, one year and has baptized one hundred and thirty-six. These figures are taken from the minutes of the Shaftsbury, Stephen-town and the Berkshire Association, and in the apportionment of the baptisms to the several pastors, except the last, are not exact, as pastorates did not uniformly end and begin with the associational year. The total number of baptisms into the North Adams church by the same authorities from the founding of the church to the present day is eleven hundred and sixty-nine.



REV. H. T. LOVE.



## Deacons

---

The church has been greatly blessed in those who have held the office of deacon. The first business held by the church after it was constituted was on January 9, 1809. In the minutes of this meeting we read:

“Chose Otis Blackinton and Caleb Whitman Deacons.” Thus the first action of the church after its constitution was the appointment of deacons. Mr. Blackinton was a farmer, and lived on his farm a mile and a half west of the village on the south road to Williamstown. He was inducted into his office in the most formal manner. A council was called, which sat through two days. An examination was made as to the character of the candidate, his views of Christian doctrine, and his views of the duties of the office he was about to enter. Then he was formally ordained by the council by the laying on of hands. Except in the case of the two elected next after these, Deacon Tyler and Deacon Long, so far as appears from the records, deacons subsequently were not ordained, but entered at once upon their duties upon their election or appointment by the church. The record of the ordination of Deacon Blackinton, inasmuch as it was among the earliest acts of the church, and somewhat exceptional in the history of the church, is of sufficient importance to be given entire:

“October 14, 1809, Voted to ordain Otis Blackinton.”

“December 24, 1809, Agreed to send a letter to Elder Kies, to Elder Leland, to Elder Warden’s church to send Deacon Carpenter and other brethren, and to Stamford church, for council, to aid us in ordaining Brother Blackinton to the office of a deacon on the Tuesday and Wednesday preceeding the last Sunday in January next.”

“January 30, 1810, According to appointment and the above request, the brethren met at the North School house in Adams



for the above business. Brethren from sister churches, viz., Cheshire, Isaac Whittington; Stamford, Jacob Sampson, Benjamin Kies, Matthew Baker.

"1st. Chose Brother Sampson, moderator.

"2d. Elder Witherell, clerk.

"3d. Looked to God to direct in so important business.

"4th. Brother Blackinton called upon, and related the work of grace on his soul; expressed his mind concerning the qualifications of deacon, also his duty; and his ideas concerning the doctrines of the gospel and the discipline of the church.

"5th. Brethren inquired as to his moral character.

"6th. Brethren voted satisfied with Brother Blackinton's qualifications for the office of a deacon, and to set him apart to that office according to the request of the church.

"7th. Voted to adjourn and meet at Brother George Whitman's tomorrow at ten of the clock in the morning.

"January 31st, met according to appointment. Elder Kies being present was received into the council.

"After calling upon God by prayer, voted Elder Kies to preach the ordination sermon; Elder Witherell to make the ordaining prayer; Elder Kies and Brother Caleb Whitman to lay on hands; Elder Kies to give the charge; Deacon Blackinton the concluding prayer. Voted to meet at eleven o'clock, instant, to proceed and ordain Brother Blackinton to the office of deacon. Lastly, voted to dissolve the council.

"JACOB SAMPSON, Moderator.

"GEORGE WITHERELL, Clerk."

Can it be doubted that there would be a greater sense of responsibility and increased fidelity in office if this usage of the fathers were still adhered to? The church has never had such a deacon as Otis Blackinton. He carried its interests upon his heart by day and by night. He led in its services when a minister was not present. When a minister was present he followed the sermon with tearful exhortations and prayers. He looked after the finances. He relieved the poor. He was at home in every home of the church. The friend and counselor of every one, never weary of walking in the footsteps of his

divine Lord and Master, going about doing good. To him and to the influence he exerted, more undoubtedly than to any other one man, whether minister or layman, does the church owe its many years of prosperity. He only that knows the heart knows how much of the Christian consecration and marvelous usefulness of that life was owing to impressions received and impulses given on that solemn day of ordination. No true Christian minister ever loses the impressions of the solemn hour of his ordination, or forgets the outgoing of his heart in unreserved devotion and entire consecration, as the hands of the men of God are laid upon his head, and before God and man he is set apart for the remainder of his earthly life to the service of God. Would that it had never been discontinued in the induction of the deacons of our churches into their office. Whether it be essential as a divine appointment or not, it is a fitting recognition of the reception of a most important trust, and of what should be the fact in the experience of minister or deacon in entire consecration to the service of Christ and of His church. Deacon Blackinton died after a life of eminent usefulness, September 20, 1848, aged seventy years, having served as deacon thirty-nine years.

Deacon Caleb Whitman, one of the constituent members of the church, was by trade a mason and plasterer. He had previously been a member of the church at Stamford, Vt., and brought a letter from that church. He continued a member of the church, holding the office of deacon until 1834.

At a meeting of the church, held March 10, 1832, the following entry occurs:

"The subject of choosing deacons being proposed, the subject was freely discussed by all of the brethren present. Bros. Duty S. Tyler and Lawson Long were mentioned as proper persons for said office. As Brother Tyler was not present, it was voted that Brother Blackinton mention the subject to Brother Tyler for his consideration."

In the records of a meeting, held May 12, 1832, we read:

"The subject of choosing deacons was next considered, and it was voted to appoint two, and that Bro. Duty S. Tyler and Lawson Long be set apart to the office of deacons, and that the ministering brethren be requested to ordain them to that office at the time of the association."

The association met that year only eight days afterward at the North Adams Church. In the annual letter of the church to the association is the passage: "We request the ministering brethren to ordain Brethren Duty S. Tyler and Lawson Long for the office of deacons." The request was referred by the association to the committee of arrangements. That committee, of which Rev. Elnathan Sweet was chairman, reported as follows: "On the subject of ordaining deacons, they think it advisable to set deacons apart to their office by ordination in the usual way." From this it is to be inferred that there was a diversity of opinion in the association as to the necessity or propriety of the proposed ordination. In accordance with the vote, however, the two brethren were duly ordained as desired by the church. The records make mention of no ordination of deacons after this.

Deacon Tyler was a manufacturer of cotton goods, and at this time one of the firm of Tyler & Ingalls, proprietors of the Union Mills. Deacon Long was a practicing physician of good repute. He removed from the town shortly after his ordination.

Upon the removal of Dr. Long there remained two deacons, Deacon Blackinton and Deacon Tyler. February 24, 1844, Samuel Ingalls, business partner of Deacon Tyler, and Edward Richmond, a manufacturer of cotton goods, who was already serving the church as clerk, were elected deacons.

Deacon Tyler, after a life second in usefulness only to that of Deacon Blackinton, entered into rest August 26, 1857, having served as deacon twenty-five years. He came to North

Adams from Conway. He was baptized by Elder Calvin Keyes at Conway in 1814. He subsequently became a member of the Second Baptist church of Savoy. That church became extinct. Upon his removal to North Adams he was, therefore, unable to bring a letter of dismissal. By special vote on April 10, 1830, he was received into the fellowship of the church without a letter. Upon the occasion of his death the Berkshire Association, at its annual meeting in 1857, made the following entry in its minutes:

"Duty S. Tyler, a deacon of the North Adams church, was ready for every good work. He was a model of Christian fidelity and a servant of Jesus, whose praise is in all the churches. May his mantle fall on some of our young Elishas, and, like him, may they ever be found at their posts and ready for the summons that shall call them away."

Deacon Ingalls, in eminent usefulness, was scarcely, if at all, behind Deacons Blackinton and Tyler. He died May 25, 1863, after nineteen years of efficient service. He was born in Cheshire, whence he removed to North Adams. He was for many years one of the foremost business men. He was baptized into the North Adams Baptist church by Rev. John Alden May 21, 1843, and was elected a deacon of the church February 28, 1844, only nine months after his baptism. Two years later he was elected clerk of the church, and served in both offices with great fidelity until his death. The record, which he as clerk entered in the minutes of the Covenant meeting one month before his death, is a devout expression of gratitude for fellowship with God's people. One month after that entry he passed to be indeed with God's people. The associational minutes for 1863 contain an obituary notice in which it is said:

"He was a deacon for nineteen years and clerk of the church for seventeen years. He possessed the entire confidence of his brethren and died as he had lived, in the assurance of a better resurrection."

Upon the death of Deacon Ingalls the only incumbent of the office was Deacon Richmond. In June, 1863, the standing committee recommended, and the church resolved, to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Deacon Ingalls. An election was held July 9, 1863; five deacons were elected, namely: John H. Eaton, Samuel C. Woodward, Jonathan Hemenway, Henry J. Chapman and Philemon Houghton Nichols.

Deacon Eaton was superintendent of one of the cotton mills. He first united with the church in 1853, by letter from Newburg, N. Y. In 1859 he removed to Pittsfield. In 1860 he returned and again became a member on letter of dismission from the Pittsfield church. Three months after his election as deacon he closed his connection with the church by removal to Colrairie.

Deacon Woodward was cashier of the Adams bank. He united with the church in 1859 by letter from Lawrence, where he had already served as deacon. Ten months after his election by the North Adams church he removed from the town, taking a letter of dismission, and thereby vacated the office.

Deacon Hemenway was a farmer, living one mile south of the village. He united with the church in 1859 by letter from Stamford, Vt. He died in the triumphs of the faith after but one year as service as deacon.

Deacon Chapman was superintendent of the woolen mills at Blackinton. He became a member of the church in 1859 upon a letter from Cassville, N. Y. He served as deacon eighteen years, until dismissed in 1881 to Middlebury, Vt.

Deacon Nichols at the time of his election as deacon was connected with the Arnold Print Works. Of all those elected deacon up to this time he was the only one who had been here baptized in this church. He was baptized in 1850. He served in the office of deacon twenty years. For sixteen years he was superintendent of the Sunday school. He died May 17, 1883. For a great part of the thirty-three years of his connection with



the church he was a devoted Christian laborer, faithfully serving the Master and his church. During the last five years of his life his home had been with a daughter in Pittsfield.

At the opening of the year 1867 there were but three deacons, of whom Deacon Chapman was at Blackinton, three miles away, and Deacon Richmond was eighty-four years of age. Thus Deacon Nichols was practically the only acting deacon. Another election became necessary. On May 2, 1867, the church elected as deacons Charles D. Dyke, Samuel Veazie, Jeremiah Wilbur, Sanford Blackinton, Oliver Arnold and J. Monroe Canedy. The last three declined to serve.

Deacon Dyke was by trade a butcher. He joined the church by letter from Lebanon Springs in 1856. He entered into rest October 5, 1872, after serving five years as deacon. He was a godly man, thoroughly devoted to Christ and His cause.

Deacon Veazie, a machinist, is still in the active service of the church. He was baptized into the fellowship of the church in 1832, having thus been for nearly half a century in the service of God, a humble, devoted, faithful follower of Christ.

Deacon Wilbur united with the church by letter from Pittsfield in 1851. He was, however, born in North Adams and was only temporarily in Pittsfield when he was there baptized. He had for many years been proprietor of the principal hotel in North Adams, and had seen in his own family and in others the dire effect of intoxicating drinks. He became convinced of the wrong involved in its sale and use, rolled his entire stock of liquors in the street and then made a grand bonfire of the whole before an immense concourse of people, amid the greatest demonstration of joy. His devoted wife had for many years been praying for him. His conversion was not only to temperance, but to Christ. He continued his hotel as a temperance house for some time, and subsequently for many years was proprietor of the leading bakery in the town. He still, with unswerving fidelity, continues to serve in the office of deacon.



## The Sunday School

---

The Sunday school of the North Adams Baptist church has been the school of the church. It has never had a separate, independent organization. It originated in the church, and the church has ever kept its control. It has never been regarded otherwise than as one of the instrumentalities by which the church may the better do its proper work. From the beginning the church has elected the superintendent, secretary, treasurer and librarian. The annual reports of these officers have been made not to the school, but to the church. In a certain sense, therefore, these officers of the Sunday school are officers of the church, elected by the church for the specific work of teaching the Word of God. Hence a conflict between church and school, not infrequent elsewhere, could never occur here.

As early as 1832 the church made a direct appropriation from its treasury for the purchase of books for the school. From time to time since, as occasion has arisen, the church has thus indicated that the work of the school is its own work. The fact that the Sunday school was regarded simply as a part of the work of the church was shown in 1836, when the Berkshire Baptist Sunday School Union was organized. The church, not the Sunday school, sent delegates to the meeting to effect that organization. And in 1850 the church, by official vote, set apart the third Sunday evening in each month for prayer for the Sunday school and missions.

The Sunday school of this church had its beginning in September, 1819, eleven years after the organization of the church.

Almost everything which has been especially salutary in its workings, and permanently spiritual in its results in the Christian church, has been the outgrowth of a higher type of piety and an increased zeal among its members. This Sunday

school was an outgrowth of a great revival. In the spring of 1819 there was a revival in the village of remarkable power. The Baptist church was the only church in the village, and it was without a pastor. The spirit that creates men anew in Christ Jesus was poured out with almost Pentecostal power. For several weeks the whole population, with few exceptions, ceased from their ordinary pursuits and gave themselves up to the consideration of their personal relations to God. The stores and shops, and even the hotel, were closed. The result was the addition of sixty persons to the little Baptist church. This was a very large number, as the community then was very small.

In the following September a few members of the church were impressed with the conviction that not enough was done in the religious training of the children and their instruction in the Word of God. They gathered a few children together on Sunday for the purpose of teaching them the Word, and impressing upon them its saving truths. Such was the origin of the Sunday school. It was conceived in a revival. Its purposes were all in accord with a revival spirit and revival purposes.

But it met opposition. It was a new thing and strange; bringing unknown practices and usages into the Lord's church, that the Lord had not instituted. It was feared that it would disturb the ancient landmarks, and become the source of laxness of faith and practice. Others feared it would overpersuade the young and lead them, when unqualified, to the acknowledgment of a faith which they had never experienced. Others objected to holding a school on Sunday, as violating its sanctity; forgetting that the Lord himself had designated those that accepted Him as His disciples,—His scholars.

But those that were in the movement had faith, and hope, and love. They persisted in endeavoring to train the children

and youth for God. They planted seed that has borne fruit beyond their utmost thought.

The first record as to the size of the school is in the letter to the association for the year 1832. That letter says: "Our Sabbath school has fourteen teachers, sixty scholars, and two hundred volumes in library."

The letter to the association for 1841 says: "Our Sabbath school is in a flourishing condition. We have continued it through the year. The scholars commit facts to memory for the Sabbath school concert. Our school numbers, with the Bible class of adults, one hundred and fifty."

Previous to this the school had always been discontinued in the winter. From this date the school continued its sessions through the year. The above is the first mention of a Sunday school concert. In a sermon preached by Dr. Miles Sanford on the semi-centennial anniversary of the school, on September 15, 1869, he has this to say in regard to the monthly concert:

"For more than twenty-nine years it is on record that we have observed the monthly Sabbath school concert. Whether it was observed previous to 1841 we are unable to learn. Since then, with occasional intermissions, its observance has been constant, and attended with highly beneficial results. Within the last few years we have succeeded in investing it with an interest which invariably secures a large attendance and leaves an excellent impression. We select some representative character of the Old or New Testament, or some topic of doctrine, and prepare on it a series of questions, which are intended to bring out whatever the Bible says upon the character or topic. These questions, some twenty-five or thirty, are numbered through the entire series. A single question is given to two scholars, one of whom is to ask the question and the other is to find an answer, consisting of one or more passages of Scripture, which he commits to memory for recitation. The pastor conducts the exercise. He announces the number of the question. One of the two who have it asks the question and the other gives the answer. If the meaning of the passage or passages

given and the answer are obscure, the pastor gives an explanation. If some important principle of divine ethics is stated he sometimes cites instances of its application. Or if some principle of practical life is given he illustrates and enforces it. This exercise is followed by recitations of a moral and religious character. Intermixed with the whole we have singing from the children, which gives it variety and charm."

Such an exercise as this, continued monthly for twenty-nine years, could but have a powerful influence for good upon the children and youth, and also upon the adults that attended.

Dr. Sanford also states that up to that date, 1869, there had been 195 baptisms from the Sunday school, an average of ten per year. In one year, 1840, forty converts from the Sunday school united with the church.

The teaching in the school at first for many years was from the Bible alone, no other text-book or helps being used. Afterwards question books were used by the teachers; then prepared lesson papers or helps have been used. In Dr. Sanford's day all question books and papers were discarded and the scholars required to go back to the old usage, and commit to memory seven or eight verses of Scripture every week. It is a serious question now whether children from the Sunday school under that usage, with such a store of Bible truth laid up in the memory, did not grow up into men and women better grounded in the Word of God than by any system that has superseded it.

The superintendents, up to the close of Dr. Sanford's pastorate, were: Rev. C. B. Keyes, Dr. Lawson Long, Rev. John Alden, Duty S. Tyler, F. W. Waterbury, Charles Butler, J. H. Eaton, S. C. Woodward and P. H. Nichols, who was superintendent eleven years.

















**HECKMAN**  
B I N D E R Y, I N C.  
Bound-To-Please®

**JUNE 03**

N. MANCHESTER, INDIANA 46962



